The UNESCO COURIER

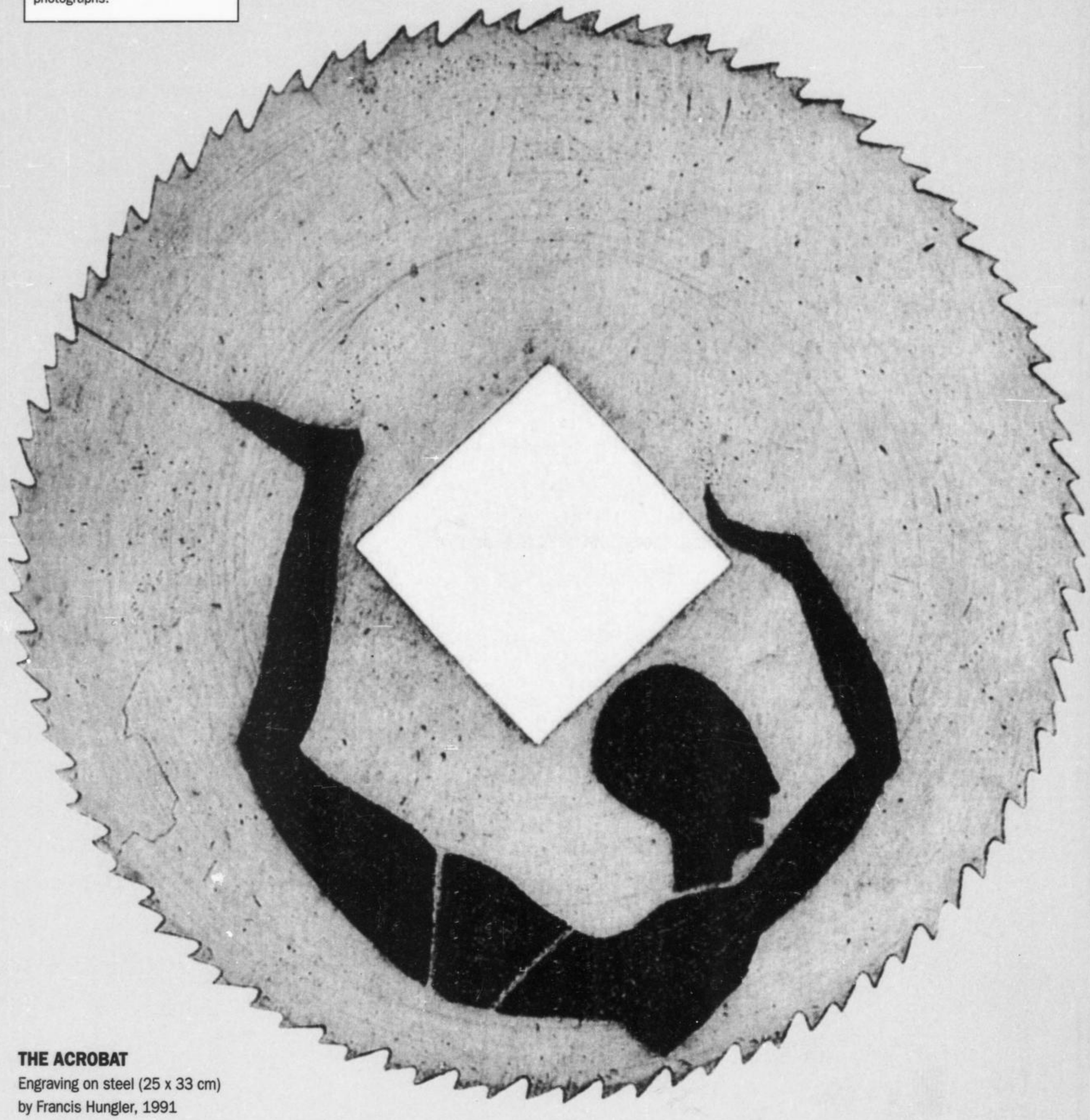
DECEMBER 1992

INTERVIEW WITH SUSANA RINALDI

The competitive world of sport

E N C O U N T E R S

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.



THE ACROBAT
Engraving on steel (25 x 33 cm)
by Francis Hungler, 1991

Drawing inspiration from Hindu art, the French artist Francis Hungler engraved this acrobatic figure on a circular-saw blade found in a loft. Against a background of primordial shapes—circle, square and triangle—he sees an image of the destiny of humankind in which "the point of perfect equilibrium and the breaking point are one and the same".

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Cover:
A composite image specially created for this issue of the *UNESCO Courier* by the Argentine artist Ezechiel Saad.

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Snow windsurfing in Iceland.

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"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."

EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

SUSANA RINALDI

talks to Fernando Ainsa

Susana Rinaldi is one of the world's great tango singers. In this interview she retraces the origins and development of this original blend of poetry and music that was forged in the cultural melting-pot of the Río de la Plata region and draws inspiration from eternal themes such as solitude, time, love, and death. As a tribute to her efforts to promote the ideals of UNESCO, Susana Rinaldi was earlier this year appointed Goodwill Ambassador for UNESCO.

■ *You were already a well-known actress when you started out as a tango singer. How and when did you discover this vocation?*

—I started to dance and sing the tango when I was four. Later on, when I was a student, I used to enjoy singing tangos for my friends, although like all young Argentines of my generation I was also mad about the bolero, rock and the Beatles. Then I went to drama school, and later pursued a career in the theatre and television. In 1966, when I was asked to make a record of poems by the Spanish poet Miguel Hernández, I refused because I was afraid that I wouldn't do it as well as Maria Casares, who had recorded them earlier. I asked whether I could record some tangos instead, and to my great surprise the record company agreed. So I made my first tango record, which featured some of the numbers that I have often sung since, such as *Melodía de arrabal* ("Melody of the Slums"), *María* and *Sur* ("South").

Since then I have tried to carry on the tradition of the tango, with its recurrent themes of injustice and the solitude of men and women in big cities. I try to convey the human qualities of the Argentine people and their profound sense of solidarity with others, something one does not often find elsewhere.

During the dictatorship in Argentina, between 1976 and 1982, I mainly sang abroad. I tried to present an image of the tango that was unfamiliar to Europeans. I tried to show that it is not only a slinky and spectacular dance, but a total experience, whose poetry is a blend of music, words and dance.

■ *What is the tango, in your opinion?*

—First and foremost, it is a form of music so distinctive that even a newcomer to it can distinguish it from other Latin American rhythms. But it is much more than that. The lyrics are often pieces of literature that have a poetic language of their own and express a vision of the world. And of course the tango is also a dance. Perhaps the best definition is that given by the great tango composer Enrique Santos Discépolo, who called it "a sad thought that is danced".

■ *To those who do not live on the banks of the Río de la Plata, the tango seems very complicated.*

—It is true that dancing the tango is an art full of virtuoso touches; its *cortes*, *quebradas*, *sentadas*, *pataditas* and *lustradas* are all steps that are rigorously codified and ritualized. The tango dancer's body seems to be divided into two parts. The top half is almost immobile, and the dancing is concentrated in the bottom half. This is why the tango was accused of being suggestive and sensuous when it first appeared.

I wonder whether the tango is a not a way of walking rather than a dance. When the *porteños*—the people of Buenos Aires—look out across the pampa to the horizon and when they think of the aggressive immensity of the city, they feel a kind of

melancholy that affects their way of walking and gives the tango its hidden rhythm. It is a dramatic, introspective dance. Ernesto Sábato once said that Italians dance the tarantella to enjoy themselves, but the *porteños* dance the tango to brood on their fate and chew over their bitterness.

■ ***All over the world, the tango is identified with its legendary exponent, Carlos Gardel.***
—Yes. This is because the tango is above all a performing art. The great tango singers like Gardel have had a style of their own, their own particular way of singing. The style may be mannered to the point of caricature. This is often because of the words, the way in which lyricists have tried to outdo each other in embroidering familiar themes. For years, the tango was a prisoner of these clichés. The myth of "Carlitos", "the magician of the tango", dictated the behaviour and physical appearance—the clothes, the hairstyle, the smile—of any tango singer who wanted to succeed. At the same time, tango singers had to act tough—the tango was a dance for hard men.

■ ***In his novel* 62, modelo para armar, *Julio Cortázar caricatures the Argentine male as a man of mature age, greying at the temples, with his hair plastered down, and dressed in a pin-striped double-breasted suit.***
—People who are into tango do tend to have a certain style, something that goes far beyond the way they look. Don't forget that this music from the poor districts of Buenos Aires has become our trademark, at home and abroad. Horacio Arturo Ferrer, a prolific writer of tango lyrics, says that the tango is an emotional state specific to the culture of the Río de la Plata. When young rock fans say that the tango is old-fashioned, they do not realize that it is an expression of the cultural identity of a people. That way of life still goes on in the streets of Buenos Aires. The tango may be a passing fashion in other countries, but for us it's the expression of our deepest experience.

Whether people like it or not, the tango is the supreme expression of the culture of Buenos Aires—of the rather sceptical attitude to life of people who don't believe in anything and never have, and who have "seen it all" even though they haven't been anywhere.

■ ***Is this why the tango is so full of sadness?***
—As a rule popular music prefers sadness and despair to gaiety and optimism, except in the case of political songs, and the optimism in them seems forced. But tangos do tend to be on the gloomy side, I must admit.

A tango like *Cambalache* ("Bric-à-brac") has done a lot of harm. It says that the "world has been and always will be a rotten mess" and that "the twentieth century is one of evil triumphant", so that "it's all the same whether you go straight or whether you are a traitor, a fool, a wise man, a thief, a generous man or a crook". It has done harm because it lends justification to the ideas of Argentines who want to shirk their responsibilities on the grounds that nothing is worth doing since "one thing is as good as another, an ass is just as good as a professor". This philosophy of life justifies drifting and resignation. It's always somebody else's fault, never one's own.

■ ***Do you think that this attitude can be traced back to the origins of the tango: the homesickness of immigrants, the resentment of the indigenous population, the lack of stable values in a changing world?***
—There has been a lot of argument about the origins of the tango. Popular music in Latin America is largely the outcome of the transplanting of nineteenth-century European dance-rhythms and their adaptation and "cross-breeding" with indigenous and African rhythms. Take the case of the Viennese waltz. It was transformed into the Boston waltz, which was danced at a slower tempo on the east coast of the United States, the creole waltz of the Río de la Plata, the Brazilian "valsa" and the distinctive Peruvian waltz. The mazurka was Americanized and became the Uruguayan *pericón oriental* and the *mazorca* or *refalosas* during the Rosas era in Argentina.[1] Paraguay adopted the polka.

The same thing happened with the tango, but the process was far more complex. It first appeared in the port cities of Montevideo and Buenos Aires. It is rather like the alluvium from a river with many tributaries, in which muddy water, organic and spiritual matter, silt and sand are all blended together. I defy anybody to retrace the origins of all these influences and explain why the tango became what it is on the banks of the Río de la Plata!

Its origins clearly have something to do with African rhythms like the *candomblé*, as well as American music such as the *habanera* and the *danzón*, and European dance-forms like the Spanish, and especially the so-called

Andalusian, tango, with its popular subjects and tunes. All these formed the fertile subsoil of a musical form that began in the so-called "Negro" dance-halls of Montevideo and in the brothels and *piringundines* (dance-halls) of Buenos Aires, the shady bars which a famous dictionary of *lunfardo—porteño* slang—describes as "places of amusement where people of dubious character congregate". Even in colonial times, decrees were drawn up to regulate the gatherings at which "negro tangos" were danced.

It is virtually impossible to know how all these different influences amalgamated to form the tango as we know it. It is impossible to say precisely when the tango was created, but there is no doubt that it soon became a popular dance in the poorer districts of Buenos Aires, where gauchos, soldiers and members of the underworld all met.

From 1870 onwards, there was a new development, as wave after wave of immigrants arrived on the banks of the Río de la Plata. Many of them lived in tenement houses known as *conventillos*. By 1887, 61 per cent of the population of Buenos Aires was of foreign origin and, in the thirty- to forty-four-year age-group, there were seven foreigners to every Argentine. Some 20 per cent of the population lodged in *conventillos,* where people of widely differing cultures lived side-by-side. This is the world described in *El tango de la casera* ("The landlady's tango"), a late nineteenth-century tango and one of the first with music and words by a well-known composer.

The first tango from the poor districts to be accepted by "respectable" society was *La morocha* ("The brunette"), which was sung in 1910 by the Uruguayan Flora Rodríguez de Gobi, mother of the celebrated violinist Alfredo Gobi. The appearance of the phonographic record in 1906 undoubtedly contributed to its popularity. A few years later, the brothel pianist Rosendo Cayetano Mendizábal composed *El entrerriano* ("The man from between the rivers"), whose rhythm has a very modern sound.

By the end of the last century, the tango already had its "academies", its dance-halls, and its *milongas* or creole cabarets, in which the passion for the tango reached fever pitch. The dancing in these places was regarded as being a contest between *compadres*[2], who drew arabesques on the beaten-earth dance-floors with their high-heeled boots. They were also meeting-places for immigrants and native-born Argentines from very different social backgrounds. They were frequented by seamen from passing ships, the "black sheep" of respectable families, *jailifes* (from the English "high life") looking for thrills, and *calaveras*, bachelors or married men on the look-out for an easy pick-up, all drawn by the tango and by the places where it was danced. In these dives, some of whose names are still nostalgically remembered, the mythology of the tango was born, including many of the stereotypes that still exist today.

■ ***These myths die hard. Is there any future for the tango if it cuts loose from the old style?***

—Television, radio and even advertising have imposed this nostalgic image of the tango and the idea that the old days were better than the present. But as the Argentine writer María Elena Walsh once said: "Try telling a woman or a workman that the old times were better than today".

Until the media decide to support a modern repertoire of songs reflecting life as it is in Argentina today, there will always be a gap between the country as it is and the way in which it finds expression in music. It's not surprising that young people should think that the tango is old hat, "old people's" music in which they do not see the signs or the myths of their time. A modern repertoire does exist, but it is never broadcast, partly for commercial reasons, but above all because of a failure to appreciate the new.

There are tangos about topical issues, depicting in few words the simple things of life, the streets of Buenos Aires, and the happiness and despair of men and women in big cities. There are tangos that celebrate imagination and fantasy threatened by routine and mediocrity. One of them is Horacio Arturo Ferrer's *Balada para un loco* ("Ballad for a madman"), which metaphorically celebrates the new Don Quixotes of the twentieth

century, who wear a bowler hat instead of a helmet and have exchanged Rocinante for a taxi.

■ ***Many writers, including Roberto Arlt, Julio Cortázar, Ernesto Sábato and Jorge Luis Borges, have felt attracted to the tango.***
—The great strength of the tango is that it has fascinated writers as different as Borges—who wrote a poem entitled "Tango", incidentally—and a popular author like Homero Manzi. The tango has enabled Ernesto Sábato to come into contact with composers who have put his words to music. It has stimulated the thinking of essayists like Ezequiel Martínez Estrada, who devotes a chapter to it in his book *Radiografía de la Pampa*, and Vicente Rossi, who has delved into its African origins. The tango is the theme of poems by Enrique González Tuñón. Writers like Baldomero Fernández Moreno and Petit de Murat have written lyrics for a number of tangos, and so has Homero Expósito, a reader of Homer, Baudelaire and Góngora. I sing tangos with words by another "serious" writer, Héctor Negro.

■ ***This is part of your fight for new standards.***
—You have to create a balanced repertoire and resist the temptation to take things easy and sing songs that are sure to be successful. I could go on singing *Sur, El motivo* ("The motive") and *Tinta roja* ("Red ink") for ever, but I don't because I feel I owe something to the authors and composers of my own time.

The great performers have always found sustenance in the past, while at the same time encouraging the new and making it their own. Carlos Gardel made a rigorous selection of the repertoire he inherited. He discarded some famous numbers and revived others that were little known. He sang old tunes in an original way and introduced new ones. But don't forget that recognition in Argentina only came to Gardel after his death. At a time when he was playing to packed houses in Europe and the United States, he could scarcely fill two rows of the stalls in Argentina. As he said himself, "You have to learn to love Buenos Aires from afar".

I have tried to do the same thing for my own time. I have revived the songs of the poet Cátulo Castillo, who was an excellent lyric-writer of the 1940s and 1950s and the author of successful plays like *El Patio de la Morocha* ("The brunette's garden"), but who was unjustly regarded as a superficial, lightweight writer. Yet he created a vocabulary that is now part of the language of Buenos Aires. If I had not made my LP *Trova* in the 1960s, Castillo would still be stuck with the label that was foisted on him twenty years earlier. I believe that every generation should rediscover the past so as better to understand the present.

I started out in the theatre and what I try to do is to tell a story through each tango by getting rid of all the platitudes which have collected around it over the years and obscured its deeper meaning. There is no pre-established formula for singing the classics. Each one has a main theme that has to be presented.

■ ***Is it a handicap to be a woman in the world of the tango?***
—There have always been women tango singers, ever since the days of the pioneer Rosita Quiroga, but they always sang about men, stories told "by" and "for" men, in which women stayed in the background. Singers like Eladia Blásquez, Carmen Guzmán, Margarita Durán and Mangui all tell human stories with which anybody, men and women alike, can identify. They refuse to think in terms of male or female stereotypes.

I like to "put across" these stories written and composed by women. I include them in my repertoire because they go beyond the usual clichés and give a new dimension to the tango. Their lyrics express a philosophy of living that is very different from that of the

"old guard". Musically too, the new tangos represent a break with the traditional subjects and ideas. A composer like Astor Piazzolla has brought to the tango a harmonic conception so original that he influences all the young composers, whether they realize it or not. These days, nobody can compose in rigid harmonies, in the style of the 1940s.

■ ***Do you think that the tango still has something to say to the younger generations?***
—I want to try to get young people to appreciate the tango as a modern form of expression, as a type of music that reflects current problems and preoccupations, and not as music for oldies. I would like to teach them to listen to this sort of music, which is still so vibrant, and above all to discover the splendid poetry of the lyrics. I feel sure that if they knew more about our musical tradition, it would help to solve in what one might call a natural way many of the problems of Argentine society. This is what I try to express when I sing. It is my way of fighting for what I believe.

---

1. Juan Manuel Rosas, Governor of Buenos Aires, dominated the Argentine political scene between 1828 and 1852.
2. Tough, quarrelsome and arrogant gang-leaders who were typical figures of the Buenos Aires working class districts.

EDITORIAL

Sport has become a universal language. At some time or other in their lives many people respond to its appeal—whether as a form of recreation, a way of keeping fit, or a test of stamina. As a mass social phenomenon, it provides an outlet for popular enthusiasm and an opportunity for the individual to join in the life of the community. On some occasions—as during World Cup competitions and the Olympic Games—it cuts across political and ideological frontiers and creates a ferment of excitement shared by a public scattered all over the planet.

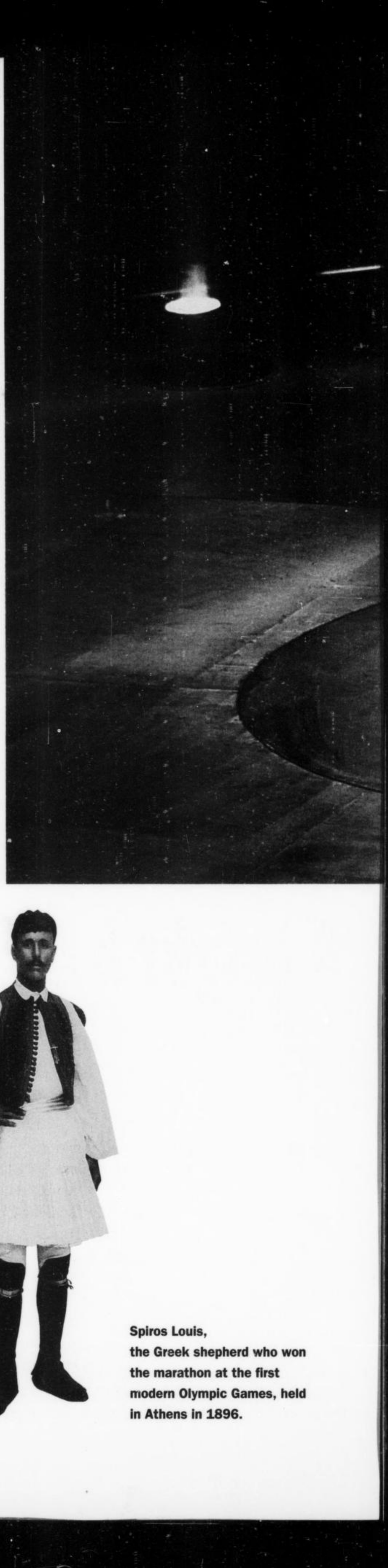
But the development of sport as a worldwide phenomenon has only come about because of the increasing importance attached to one specific aspect of sport—top-flight competition—to the detriment of sport as a form of play and a means of education. It has also resulted from excessive concentration on a limited number of spectacular events, a process which has in turn exposed sport to ever-greater attention from business and the media.

In recent decades these trends have sometimes led to excesses and abuses: a worship of professionalization which can cause athletes to specialize at a very early age, become slaves to overloaded training and competition schedules, and fall prey to doping; wheeling and dealing inseparable from the development of spectator sport on a colossal scale; outbreaks of fanaticism and chauvinism that are sparked off by the hot-house pressures of competition and are used, in some cases irresponsibly, to give vent to social or national frustrations.

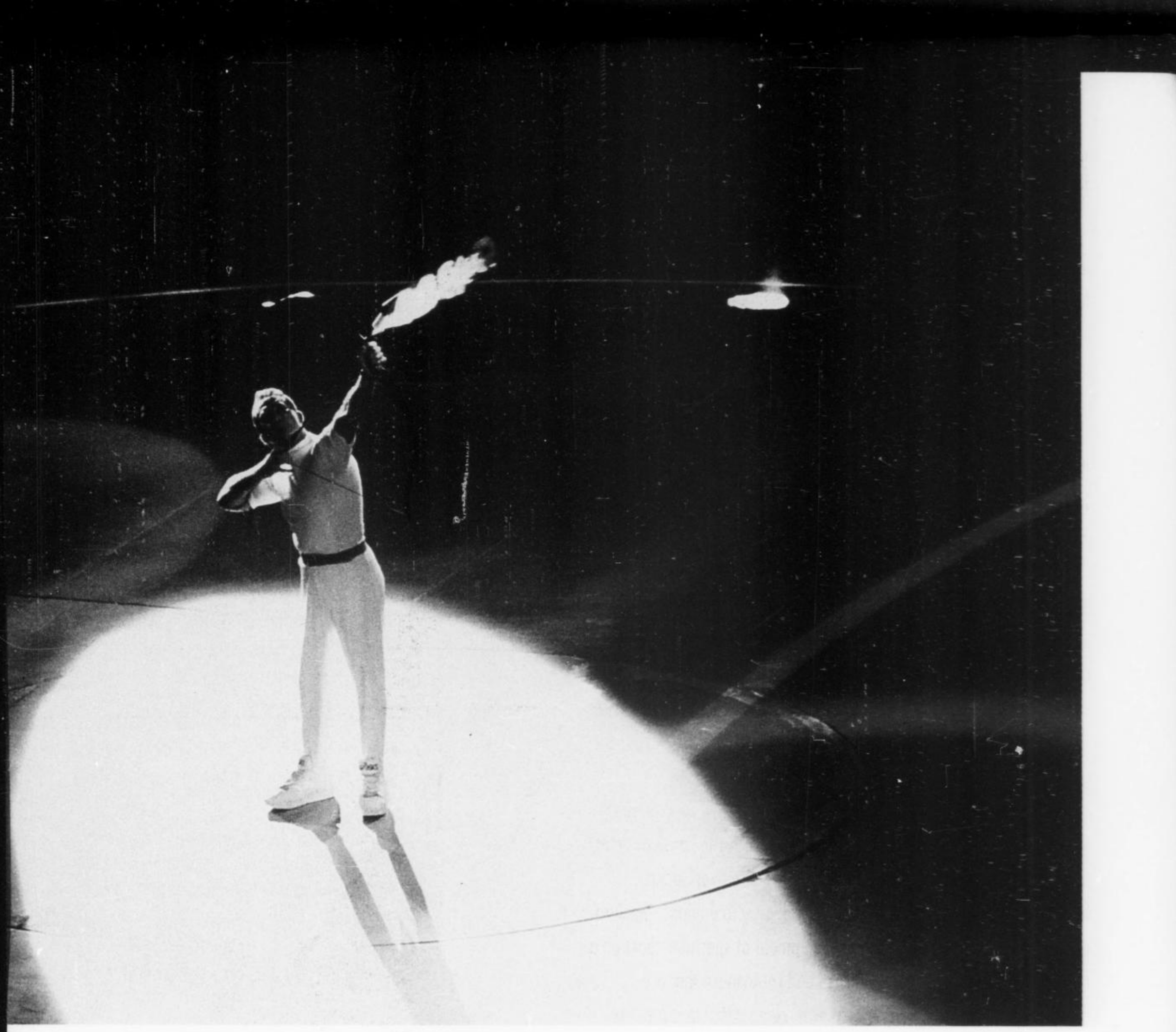
Some people believe that these are reasons to condemn sport out of hand. However, they tend to forget that in spite of everything sport still has many things to offer: unique opportunities for personal fulfilment; a magnificent training in community spirit; a civilized form of confrontation between individuals and groups. All this forms a subtle blend in which the desire to outperform others finds expression in complete respect for rules that are the same for everyone, in which competition brings adversaries together, and in which victory and defeat are fused in love for an art practised communally.

For UNESCO, one of whose tasks is to uphold the ethical standards on which sport is based, sport will continue to be a way of bringing together people from all over the planet as long as it remains the "school of nobility" which Pierre de Coubertin, a century ago, saw as its prime vocation.

Bahgat Elnadi and Adel Rifaat ■



**Spiros Louis,
the Greek shepherd who won the marathon at the first modern Olympic Games, held in Athens in 1896.**



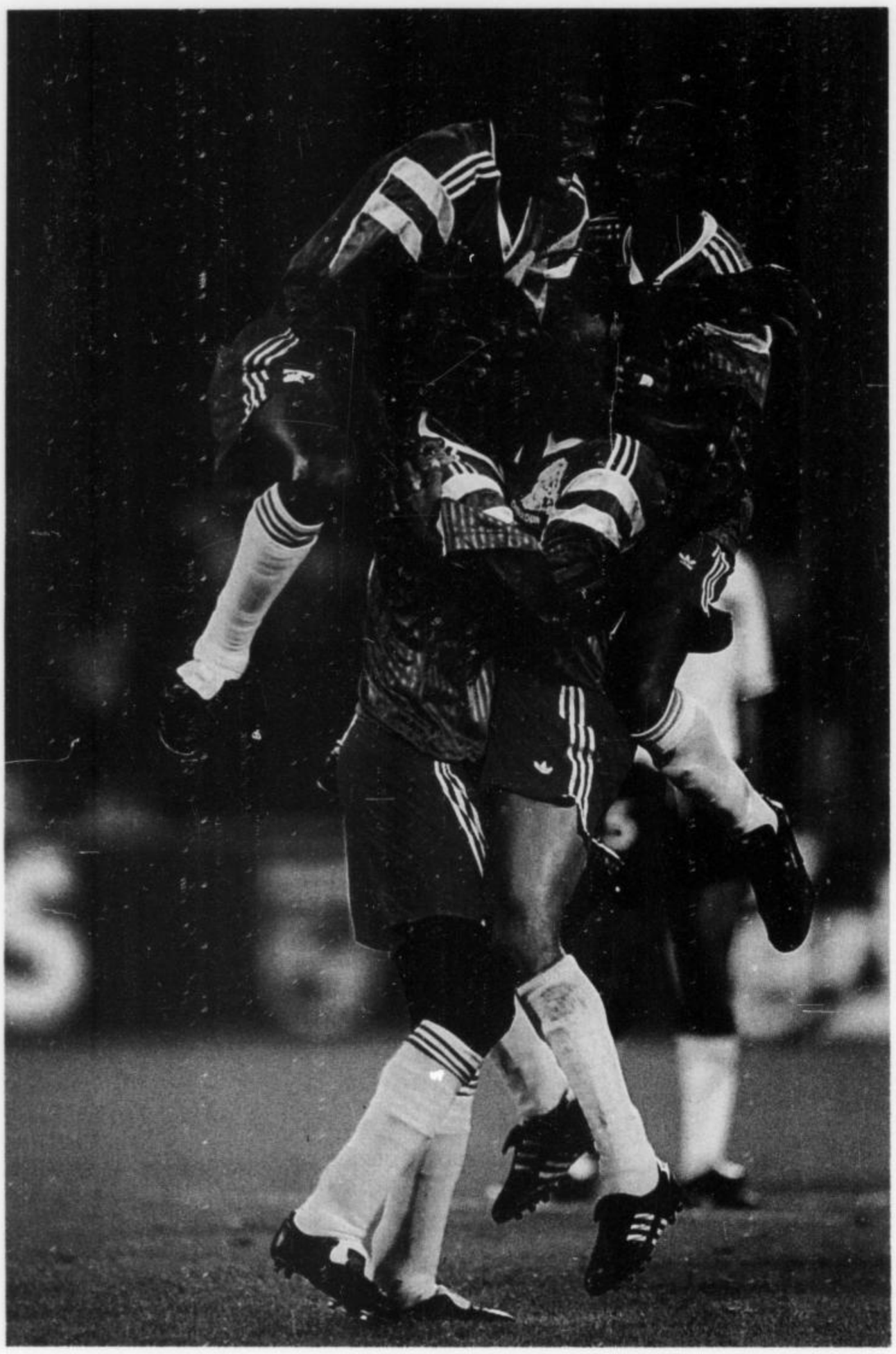
A bright but flickering flame

by Pierre Henquet

AFTER a period of remarkably rapid growth throughout this century, sport has, during the last thirty years, developed into a phenomenon of worldwide importance. Analysts and advocates of sport, political leaders, researchers, journalists and administrators, have styled it an important aspect of contemporary culture and civilization, a field of social activity in its own right, a key factor in political strategy and an economic force of the first magnitude. In short, it is seen as a phenomenon that has done much to shape our time. More enthusiastic or lyrical sports fans go so far as to view sport as the common denominator of all humanity, a sublimated form of capitalist competition, the most accessible form of community experience or even, in the words of Pierre de Coubertin, father of the modern Olympic Games, "the brightest flame to blaze in the hearts of humanity".

At once a technique, a leisure activity, an institution and a myth, sport is a protean concept. Although it appears to be a somewhat irrational notion, it has attracted researchers from a number of fields to a new discipline that has come to be known as "sport science". Its many definitions are often partial in both senses of the word, and have led to debate

An archer prepares to light the Olympic fire during the opening ceremony of the Summer Games at Barcelona in 1992.



Cameroonian soccer players jump for joy after scoring a goal in the World Cup, Naples, 1990.

(which usually tends to be artificial or semantic) over the distinction between sport and games, body movement, physical activity, physical education and physical culture. For its part, UNESCO uses a single conceptual package comprising "physical education and sport" both in its programme and in the text of an International Charter that was promulgated on the subject in 1978.

ACCESS TO SPORT

In recent years, sport has become increasingly institutionalized, with most countries establishing systems of sporting activities jointly administered by the government and voluntary organizations. With its enormous pool of dedicated voluntary workers, this system is probably the world's largest associative movement in terms of numbers.

Between 15 and 70 per cent of the population of every country practises a sport (whether supervised or not) on a regular basis. It is estimated that the numbers involved amount to over a billion persons worldwide. This powerful force, grouped in a multitude of sporting clubs, leagues and federations at the local, regional, national and international levels, is considered by some to be a mainstay of democracy in action and an opportunity for young people, who are the most involved, to learn the meaning of democratic pluralism.

However, access to sport and physical education is far from being a universal right, despite the brave words of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport. The map of underdevelopment in sport is in all but a few details identical to that of underdevelopment in general. In many countries of the South, four out of five young people have no opportunity to practise a sport.

Nevertheless, despite such discrepancies and inequalities—which are tending to get worse instead of better—sport has become much more democratic. A marginal, elitist activity at the turn of the century, it is now a mass phenomenon which, if used for political ends, can lead to risks of regimentation or the establishment of a state of childlike dependence.

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SPORT

Whereas games involving imitation and illusion prefigure the arts of entertainment, sport is the offspring of physical games, especially competitive games, and should be regarded, in the words of former UNESCO Director-General René Maheu, as "a free and disinterested activity of free people." Otherwise the game element disappears. Maheu considered sport to be the modern incarnation of chivalric tradition, declaring that "sport that resembles work is not sport".

The recent boom in top-flight competition, to the detriment of amateur sport (a notion that has disappeared from the Olympic Charter), gives grounds for fearing that the "play" dimension of sport will be increasingly ignored and that competitive sport will become professionalized.

For athletes subject to the constraints of modern training methods, the fun has gone out of sport, which is becoming hard labour. Some regard sport as ambiguous, part work part play, "playful work" or "industrious play". Others consider sports as play insofar as they are practised for their own sake. How far does such disinterestedness exist today when it is common knowledge that the leading lights of sports that receive wide television coverage are lavishly paid?

Traditional games and sports are another matter altogether. Richly symbolic of the heritage of traditional societies, they are part of a cultural totality of which they are a form of

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expression and a means of regulation. The values they enshrine and the skills and techniques they call for are very often different from—if not antithetical to—those of modern sport. Most often practised in an informal and non-institutional context, traditional games and sports are the reflection of both individual and collective cultural identities as well as being significant factors in cultural development.

In many countries, popular national and regional games and sports (with few exceptions) are losing ground, and this seems likely to be an irreversible process. Some observers go so far as to predict that the world's game culture, however rich and diversified it may be, is doomed to extinction—even if certain "fossilized" forms may be preserved as folklore—and that it will be replaced by a sanitized, institutionalized, standardized, universal sports culture, erected as a shining example of modernity.

However, physical activity as reflected in sport is far from being the universal practice handed down through the ages that many claim it to be. To establish the preponderance of sport over every other approach to physical activity throughout the world is to proclaim the hegemony of a specific concept of sport—that practised in the Western world today.

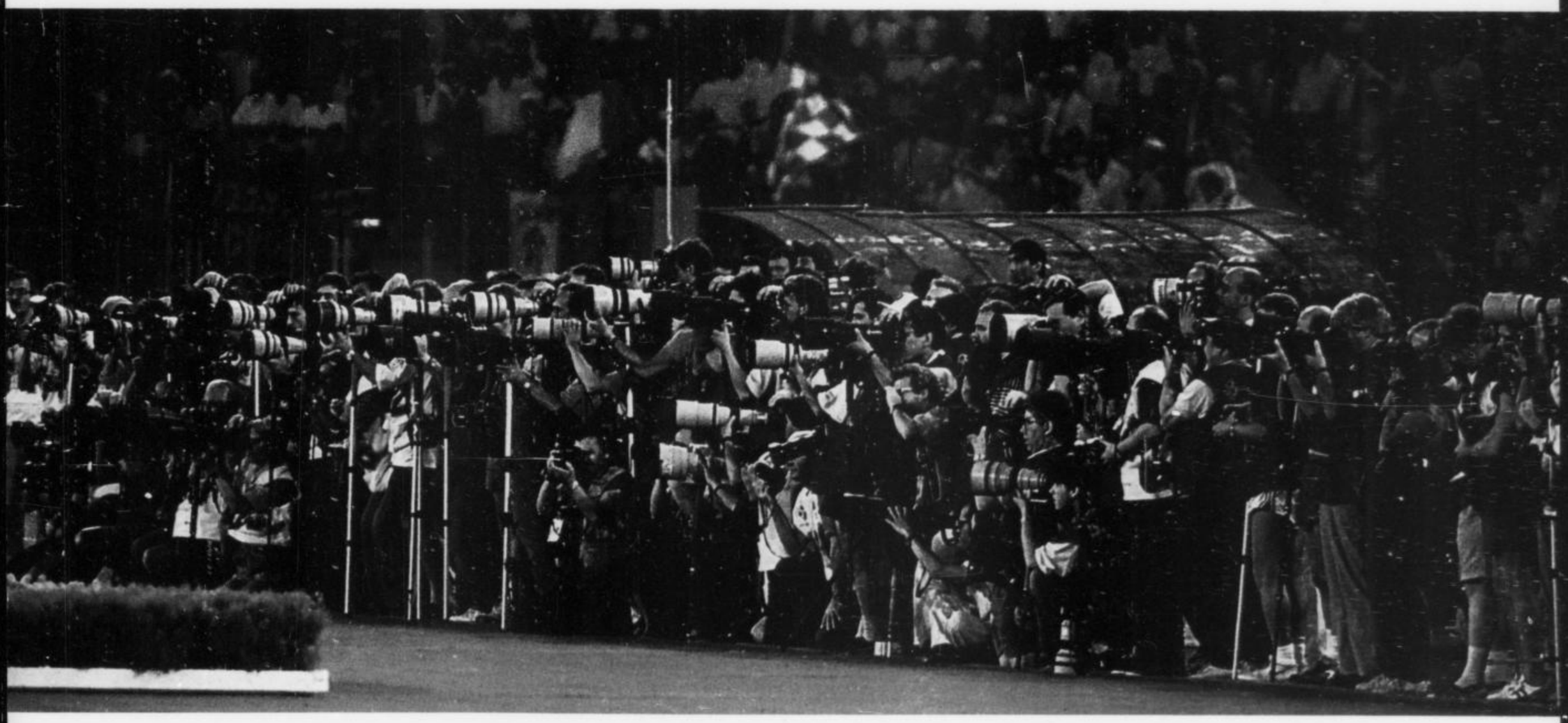
Traditional games and sports are nevertheless part of the non-material cultural heritage of humanity. As such, they deserve to be included in a descriptive inventory, as recommended to UNESCO by the International Congress on Physical Activities, Sport and Development, held in Nabeul (Tunisia), in February 1992. If certain sports have to be preserved as folklore, then at least let us have a catalogue of them.

Those countries most exposed to the seduction of modern sport (notably soccer and tennis) risk seeing their cultural identity becoming gradually impoverished. Yet many leaders in the developing countries fear that attempts to promote the revival of national games and sports, or a return to traditional physical activities, would tend to marginalize their young people even further, by denying them access to internationally recognized modern sports, which are an incomparable source of national pride and prestige. Policies of this kind, they argue, would run counter to the drive for integration, as they would promote cultural practices deeply rooted in the ethnic subsoil and stifle the sense of national identity and of belonging to the international community. The world appears to be moving inexorably towards the adoption of a universal sporting culture, wherein sport, like society itself, may well lose in spirit what it gains in strength.

AFTER THE BRAIN DRAIN—THE BRAWN DRAIN

Sport is a flourishing and fast-expanding market. The sports industry alone accounts for between one and two per cent of the industrialized countries' Gross National Product and is growing more quickly than most other sectors of the economy. Moreover, it managed to survive the crisis of the 1980s with a healthy average annual growth rate of five per cent.

Research on this new branch of the economy has revealed the considerable sums of money involved in the production, trade and distribution of sport-related goods and services. To take one example, in 1980 almost 7,000 companies with a total of over 300,000 employees belonged to the French Federation



A phalanx of press photographers during a World Cup soccer game.

of Sporting Industries. A survey carried out in Germany estimated the number of salaried posts in this sector at 45,000. Comparable figures for the developing countries are not available, but it can be assumed that the same trends exist there, although to a lesser degree and with a slight time lag.

At the same time, the sports industry is becoming increasingly international, accounting for between two and two-and-a-half per cent of world trade. The world market for sporting accessories, excluding infrastructures and facilities, is far in excess of $50 billion. Nevertheless, the terms of trade are unfavourable to the countries of the South, which depend on the industrialized world for imported high-technology products, whereas they themselves export goods with very low added value.

Sports underdevelopment is a corollary of economic underdevelopment, as indicated by the unimpressive scores obtained by the developing countries in international sporting events (at the 1984 Olympics, only 62 medals out of 687—9 per cent—went to athletes from these countries) and by the "brawn drain" that goes hand-in-hand with the brain drain. We are perhaps closer than we think to the time when it will become virtually impossible for an athlete to step up to the Olympic podium if he or she has not been trained in a country equipped with modern facilities, or by a coach from one of the industrialized countries.

Sport has thus come to play a prominent role on the world economic scene. This relatively recent development, as well as the internationalization of sport, is largely explained by the close, complex, almost symbiotic relationship that has been created and constantly reinforced between sport, the media and advertising. Despite the important role played by the written press in the early days of sport, it was television, more than any other medium, that seized upon sport, turned it into a vehicle for advertising and provided it with financial backing. In a country like France, for example, in 1990, soccer was financed by spectators to the tune of 35 per cent (as opposed to 80 per cent twenty years before), by television (23 per cent), by sponsors (22 per cent) and by official sources (20 per cent).

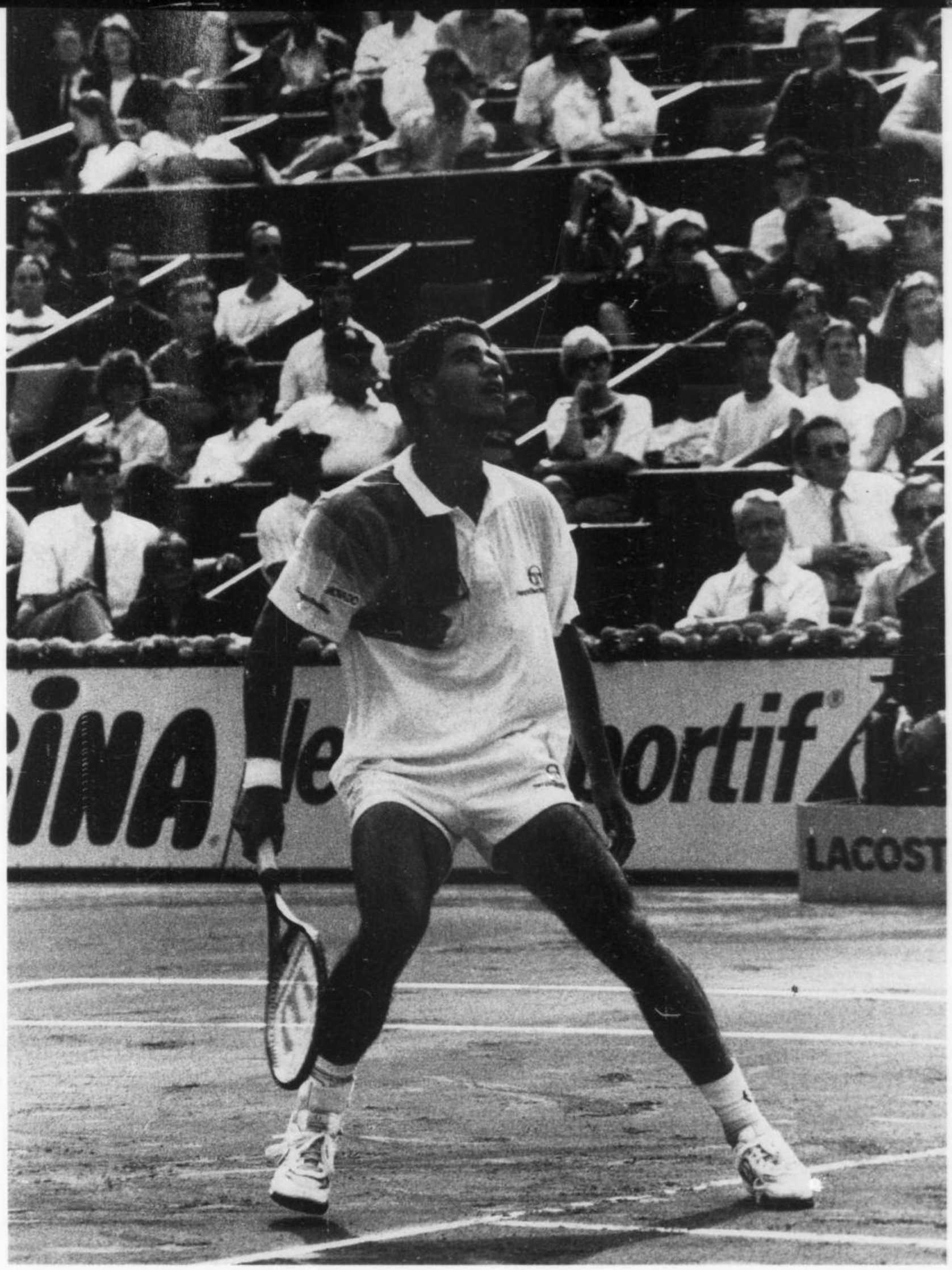
Economic interests, inextricably linked to media interests, are playing an increasing role in shaping sports programmes, influencing their rules, transforming sport into entertainment, and having a large say in the way it is performed. With three sports (cycling, tennis and soccer) taking up half the air-time devoted to sport on European television, the standardization of physical activity is more than just an idle threat. Economic interests, the media and sporting authorities have no choice but to get together and make sport profitable. With the twenty-first century just around the corner, competitive sport needs television in order to survive.

TOP-LEVEL SPORT OR SPORT FOR ALL?

What importance should be attached to top-level sport in relation to the concept of sport for all, and to the promotion of physical activity and sport at school and in non-formal education programmes, particularly in the developing countries? The cost of high-level competitive sport—already expensive—is growing more rapidly than the number of people taking part. The priority facing developing countries is to satisfy the basic needs of their populations. Should top-level sport be regarded as a basic need? Is it wise for such countries to invest in sport at this level and host major international sporting events?

Economists are divided on this question. The necessary facilities are difficult to amortize and maintain. They are ill adapted to the needs of the local population and lead to technolo-

Youngsters at play in China.



"Three sports (cycling, tennis and soccer) take up half the air-time devoted to sport on TV". Right, American tennis star Pete Sampras keeps an eye on the ball during the 1991 French Open in Paris.

gical dependency on other countries because of the complex ancillary equipment that is required. Hosting the Olympic Games or international championships often turns out to be more expensive than expected, so that countries have to resort to borrowing. However, the sporting authorities in the Third World, motivated more by political than economic considerations, set great store by top-flight sport and continue to campaign for greater geographical diversity in the location of major events, and a more balanced representation of countries in international sporting bodies.

On the other hand, the promotion of physical activity and sport for all should definitely be considered an integral part—and a vehicle—of development. The individual and collective benefits to be derived from the regular, moderate practice of sport are incontestable. Physically speaking, the practice of a sport, when combined with sensible eating habits, is unquestionably the most effective, pleasant and inexpensive way to stay young and fit and to reduce state expenditure on health. It would be hard to imagine a more important asset to a country than the health of its citizens.

At the psychosocial level, sport is character-building and conducive to the full development of the personality, improving emotional balance, and helping the individual to put personal success or failure into proper perspective. Intellectually, it is a source of knowledge and a guide in the learning process. Lastly, sport encourages co-operation, solidarity and mutual understanding, and can thus help people to play a full part in the society in which they live, and can contribute to the struggle against all forms of exclusion. ❐

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of France, was a UNESCO staff member between 1946 and 1983. He is the author of many articles on non-formal education, functional literacy, communications, youth and sport. He is currently assistant secretary-general of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education.

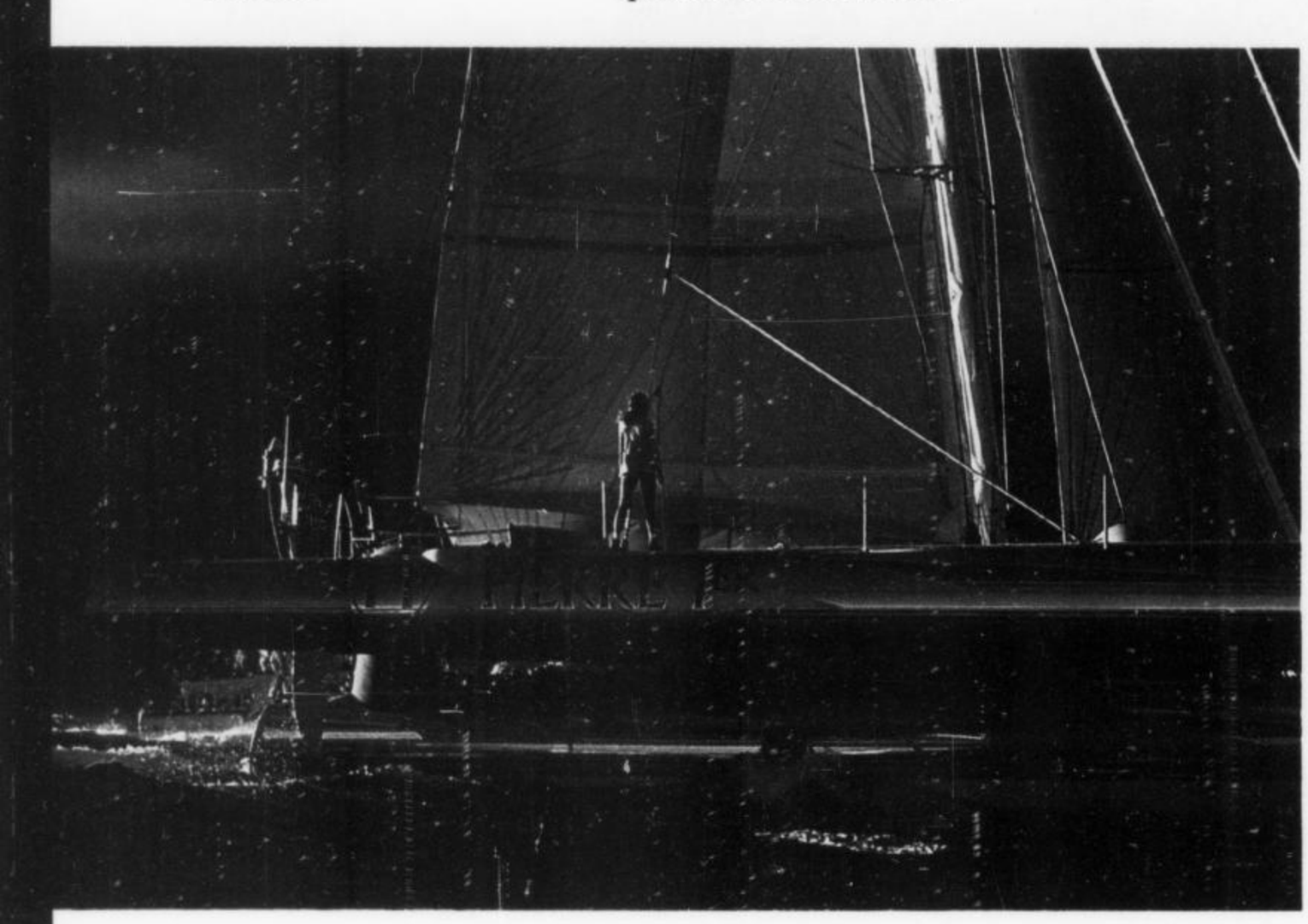
Who should foot the bill?

by Jean-François Nys

WHEN a major sporting event is due to take place, especially if it is to be televised, businesses scramble for every possible inch of space on which to inscribe their company logo—the surrounds of the arena itself, the bodywork of cars, the players' shirts and even the flooring of indoor sports halls. Only the Olympic Games are free from this kind of advertising, but even there the official sponsors are authorized to use the Olympic emblem (the five rings representing five continents), an authorization which costs them dear.

What is true for the Olympic Games holds good for all sports. In order to cope with ever-increasing outlays (salaries, administrative costs), the clubs and organizers of competitions are obliged to seek out sponsors or patrons. Many companies respond eagerly to this invitation. Thus sponsorship of professional football in France, which represented less than 1 per cent of receipts in 1970, brought in nearly a quarter of them in 1991.

"Every sport has a specific image with which the sponsor becomes associated. . . ." Below, French navigator Florence Arthaud, winner of the Route du Rhum transatlantic race in 1990.



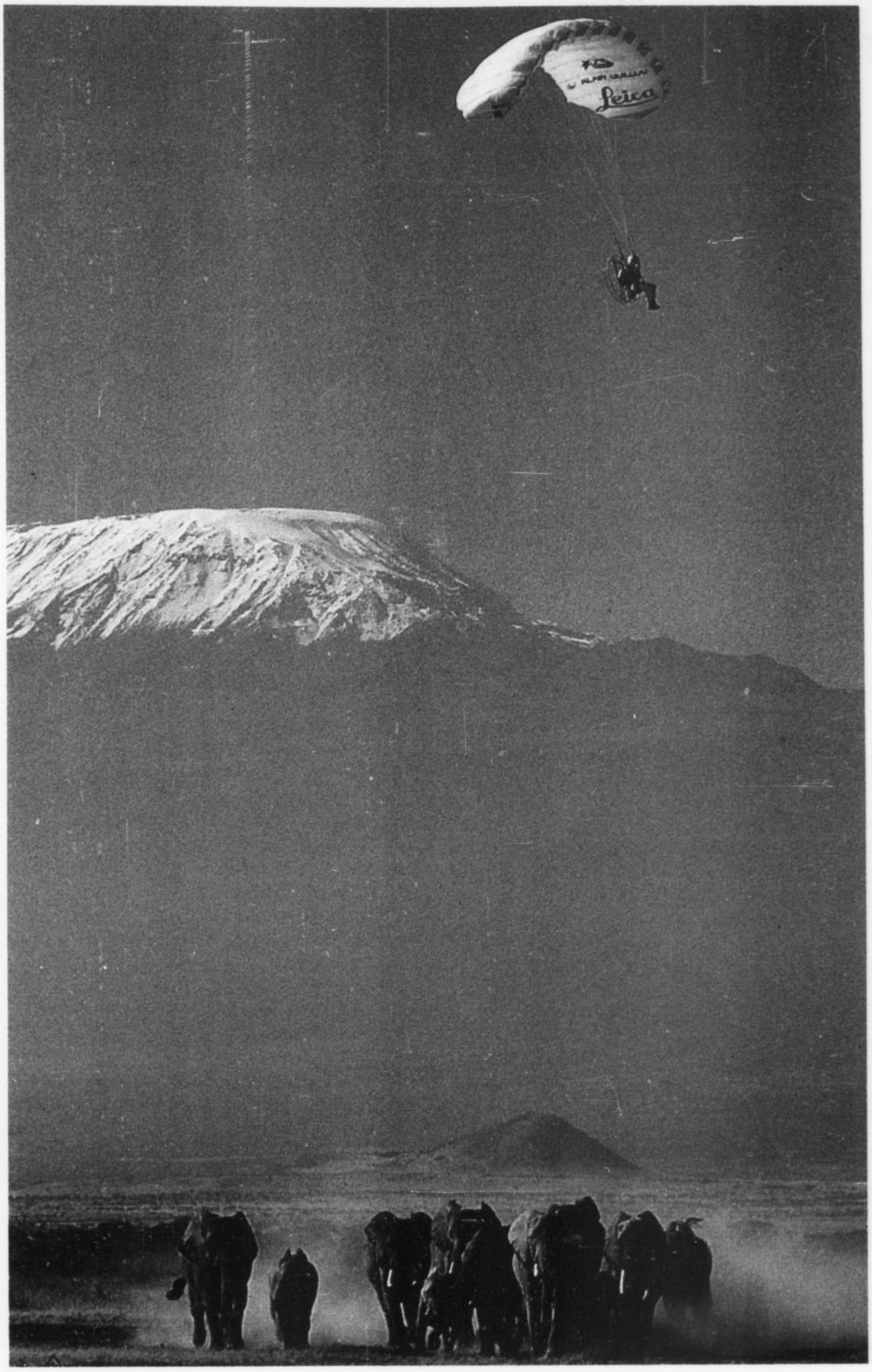
By identifying itself with the image that a sport creates and with the emotion, enthusiasm, passion even, that it generates, a company consolidates its position and role in society, motivates its personnel, improves its reputation and reinforces or modifies its image in the public eye. Semiological studies in this field tell us that every sport has a specific image with which the sponsor becomes associated. Sailing, for example, symbolizes space, the lure of the open sea and controlled skills; fencing evokes nobility, tradition, precision; while motor-racing symbolizes virility, dynamism, authenticity and pushing oneself beyond the limit.

In Europe, the money expended on sports sponsorship amounts to more than 20 billion francs. In the United States it is over $2.5 billion. However, this source of financing is not stable. It is not the primary function of businesses to promote the development of sports, except for those that exploit the market directly, such as the makers of sports goods or equipment and the sporting press. Most companies are prepared to invest in sponsorship only insofar as it helps them to get their message across. Here sport finds itself in competition with other interests such as cultural activities, conservation of the environment, the great humanitarian causes and scientific research. Furthermore, a company's expenditure on this form of communication will vary with changing circumstances. It would be hazardous to base a sports policy on such uncertain resources.

The money for sport does not derive solely from the private sector—from players, spectators, the media and sponsors. State and other public organizations contribute to a greater or lesser degree to the financing of sport, in proportions which vary according to the country's economic structure. In the former USSR, the state assumed almost the entire charge, while in the United States sport is a matter for the private sector. In France, public money expended on sport amounted to 32 billion francs in 1990—as much as that contributed by private companies and individuals.

This peculiarity of the French sports system has evoked in the European Parliament the question of the legitimacy of subsidies granted to sports clubs by public organizations, with some members of the Parliament regarding such subsidies as an unwarranted interference in the free play of competition.

Rather than seek an answer to this specific question, one could, perhaps, broaden the debate to consideration of the overall economic basis of sport. If it is thought to be a private matter, its management and financing should be left to the private sector, and market forces will prevail. Competition then becomes the order of the day, with the various sporting federations competing to dominate the market for control of a particular sport and the clubs competing to recruit players, to sell sporting



Jumping with a motorized parachute in Kenya.

events and to capture the imagination of the public.

If, on the contrary, sport is seen as a collective benefit requiring public sector control, then it will be up to the state and the community to provide the necessary facilities, pay the coaches and athletes, and make sport available to all.

If a strict market logic prevails, there is a danger that inequalities will be created and that access to sporting activities will be denied or reduced for the less favoured members of society. It is therefore appropriate for the public authorities to intervene to mitigate the dysfunctioning of the market, just as they should control excesses such as doping and violence. ❐

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A red card for the round ball

by François Thébaud

MAY 1964, the National Stadium in Lima—320 dead; June 1968, the River Plate Stadium in Buenos Aires—80 dead; January 1971, Ibrox Park in Glasgow—66 dead; February 1974, Cairo—48 dead; October 1982, the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow—99 dead; May 1985, the Heysel Stadium in Brussels—39 dead; April 1989, Hillsborough, Sheffield—94 dead.

The settings for all these tragedies were football stadiums, and their victims were men, women and children who were there to watch a big soccer match. Since no other sport has ever been plunged into mourning by catastrophes on such a scale, perhaps we should ask ourselves whether there is not some sort of special relationship between soccer and violence.

Soccer supporters resent this accusation against the most popular of all sports. They argue that violence is endemic in modern society, where it takes the most varied forms, from mass slaughter on the battlefield to delinquency and crime. Soccer stadiums are not exempt, because the people who flock to them are also products of society.

If that is true, why is it, then, that athletics meetings and basketball or rugby matches are not prone to the same baleful effects of their social environment and do not give rise to the kind of scene that so horrified those who witnessed the Heysel disaster on television?

Too little too late

Soccer—Association Football—is clearly not at the root of the violence. Yet it seems to offer people more opportunities to get it out of their system, primarily because in the 166 countries affiliated to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), it is the most popular sport in terms of the number of people who play it, the size of its public, and the passions it arouses.

Packing people together like sardines on the lower-priced terraces often leads to incidents

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In April 1989 wreaths and flowers cover the pitch at Anfield, the stadium of Liverpool Football Club (UK), in memory of the club's supporters who had died a week before during a crush at Hillsborough, Sheffield, before the F.A. Cup semi-final.

that are not always reported in the press. However, when the people on the terraces are fans who have come to give "their" team unconditional support and to exhibit equally unconditional hostility towards the opposing side and its supporters, the resulting crush inevitably tends to degenerate into violence.

Attempts have been made to separate the different groups of supporters and cordon them off in enclosures situated well away from one another, as well as keep close watch on them when they enter or leave the ground, but these measures have proved inadequate, as the Heysel tragedy showed. Club managers and sporting federations came to realize that far-reaching changes were needed in the design of stadiums, which often dated from pre-war times, and even as far back as the early years of the century in the case of the United Kingdom. In theory, stadiums hosting international matches are now supposed to have only seated accommodation, not so much for the comfort of the spectators as for safety reasons. Furthermore, they are fitted out with electronic surveillance devices capable of detecting the slightest sign of violence and enabling the police to take rapid action.

The amateur spirit in rugby

The vast number of people attending soccer matches is not sufficient in itself to account for the game's unfortunate propensity for violence. In both Europe and Oceania, rugby matches attract crowds of 50,000, and no serious incident has ever been recorded. Rugby is a sport that is just as "manly" as soccer in certain respects, but it attracts a different public and does not trigger off the same reactions.

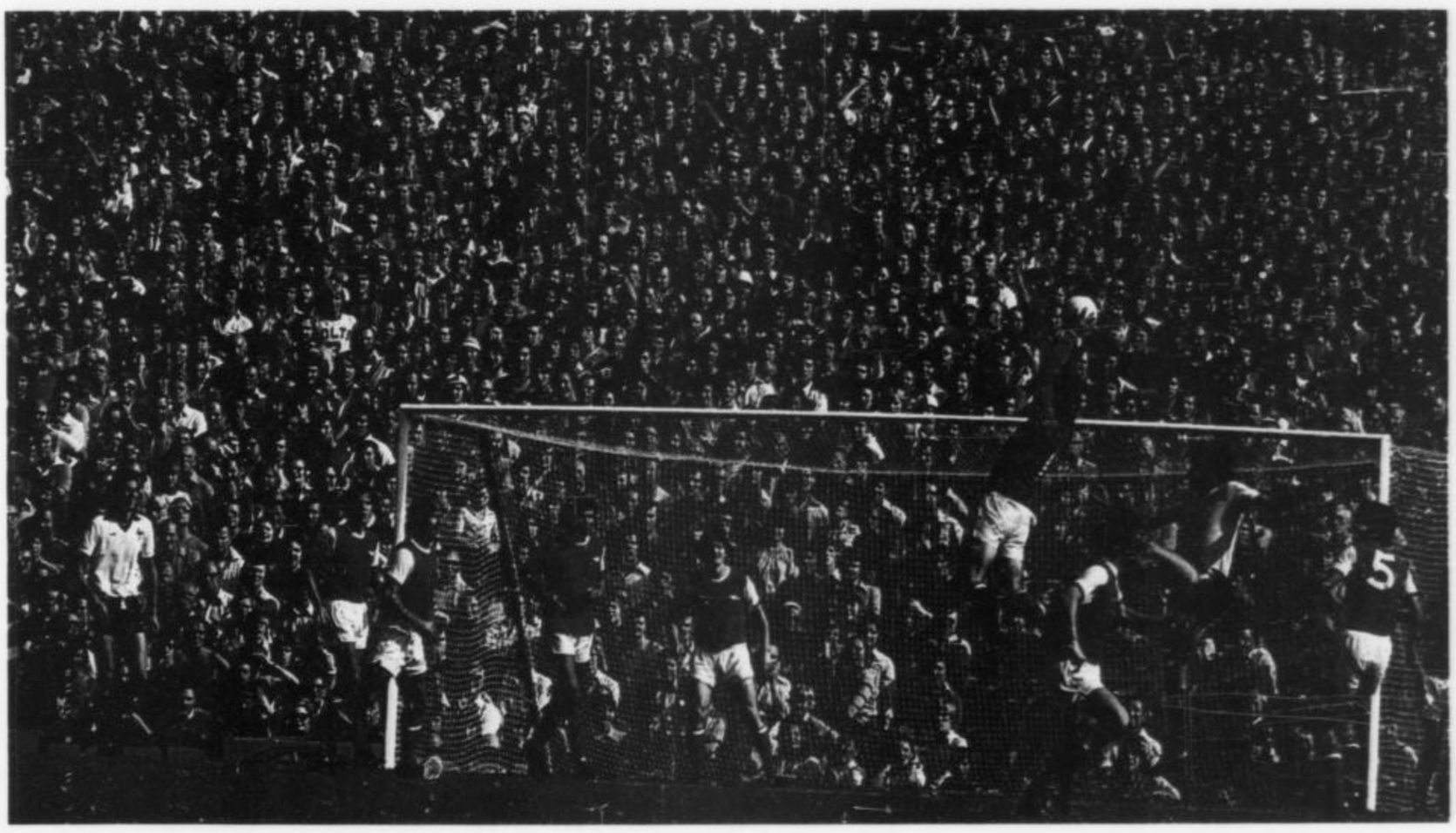
Rugby football crowds have not changed since the 1950s. They come from much the same background, continue to believe in amateur sport and do not attach undue importance to results. They are more interested in the spirit of the game and the standard of play. They keep their cool when the result or the refereeing are controversial, and the stands remain models of calm and good behaviour even when the match is being fiercely contested on the pitch.

By contrast, European soccer crowds have changed almost beyond recognition. Manual workers, who formed the bulk of the spectators on the terraces before the Second World War, have been replaced by white collar workers, and middle class supporters sit in the stands. Professional soccer is also increasingly dominated by the financial pickings at stake in big matches. Winning is the main, if not the only, obsession of players and spectators alike. The way in which victory is achieved and the quality of the game itself take second place. The print media and television are partly to blame for this by cutting back on the amount of space and time they give to comment and analysis of technical skills and the fine points of the game.

This being so, why should soccer supporters be interested in soccer for its own sake, in the quality of play, tactics and skills? Why should they not contribute to the result by taking part in the match? Intimidating the referee and the players of the opposing side by threats, insults and bottle or stone-throwing is commonly the curtain-raiser to the outbreaks of fighting between supporters and the ensuing panic that are the direct cause of the tragedies we have mentioned.

Nationalism and violence

Soccer fans did not always behave like this. Not all that long ago, they often had an opportunity to express their pleasure and enthusiasm during matches which left spectators with the feeling that they had shared an enjoyable experience. What splendid memories we still have of the



Soccer is "the most popular sport in terms of the number of people who play it, the size of its public, and the passions it arouses".

matches played by the Hungarian and Brazilian teams of the 1950s, or the performances of leading clubs like Real Madrid or Rheims in the 1960s! And what about those never-to-be-forgotten F.A. Cup Finals in England when, before the kick-off, the 100,000 spectators in Wembley Stadium became an immense choir singing with one voice and creating an atmosphere of fellowship in which the beauty of the game was all that mattered. Great moments like these are all too rare nowadays.

Instead of providing an occasion for peaceful confrontation between styles of play reflecting the different geographical, historical, economic and cultural backgrounds of the opposing sides, international competitions have often become head-on clashes, with no holds barred. During the World Cup and the Intercontinental Cup-winners' Cup there have been many unpleasant examples of negative attitudes to the game which spectators have not only failed to condemn but in some cases have even condoned.

National anthems played before matches by brass bands and sung by the supporters clearly do not encourage serenity on the terraces or fair play on the field. But those who call for an end to these practices of another age have not been listened to in the world republic of football, where voluntary submission to a common law—the law of the game—ought to exclude any form of chauvinism that leads to violence.

Is soccer really blameless?

After the Heysel tragedy, the culprits were initially sought among the "hooligans", who work off their frustrations in the tightly packed crowds at football grounds. However, as the enquiry proceeded, it became clear that there was no straightforward explanation for the violence that had taken place. Violence is a product of society and of its contradictions and shortcomings, and football stadiums are not immune to it. However, the world of Association Football itself is not as blameless at it would have us believe. Managers, trainers, players and referees, journalists and spectators must all realize that the battle against sectarian nationalist attitudes and in favour of sportsmanship is first and foremost theirs. This may not bring violence in football stadiums to an end, but at least it may help to limit its incidence and its consequences. ❐

France vs. Australia in the Rugby Football World Cup, Sydney (Australia), 1987.

Sport and friendship between peoples

SPORT has, of course, developed on an extraordinarily wide scale. It is probably the aspect of modern life which is most widely encountered throughout the world—the only one, perhaps, which is common to both industrial societies and developing countries. It is also, to a steadily increasing degree, one of the most lively factors in international relations. There are few international exchanges, encounters or contacts which arouse so much mass feeling as sports events.

But though it is becoming more and more international in fact, is present-day sport truly international in spirit, as Coubertin thought and wished it to be? It is, unfortunately, extremely doubtful. In point of fact, nationalism, chauvinism and even racism are more and more apt to win the day—and what a loss it is—in international sports events. The passions and emotions that these events arouse and that are amplified and broadcast to the four corners of the Earth by the mass media are only very rarely inspired, it must be acknowledged, by the ancient moral law and social virtues once presided over by Zeus Philios, god of friendship. It is high time to act if we wish to prevent the Altis of Olympia from degenerating into the Roman Circus or the Hippodrome of Byzantium.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am not suggesting that the emotional appeal possessed by sports events, which have become the great popular drama of our time, should be curbed. This would be absurd and, for that matter, impossible. One of the functions of such events—among the most salutary, moreover—is the same, at a much higher degree of intensity, as that assigned by Aristotle to all drama: catharsis, the purging of passions and instincts. Nor is there any question of trying to deprive athletes of the admiration they receive, especially from their fellow-citizens. Like any other form of excellence, athletic feats are deserving of admiration, and it is natural that those who have most in common with the victorious athlete should be the ones in whom this admittedly noble sentiment wells up most strongly.

But just as no sports context can be without desire for victory, so none can be without rules and ethics. It is these rules by which it is governed, these ethics by which it is informed, that distinguish sport from the savage struggle for life whose name is war. It is compliance with these norms that transforms a feat into a virtue, and since these norms are by definition universal, it follows that although the feat may be ascribed to a given country, the virtue is ascribable purely to humankind.

What can be more barbarous than this identification of the public with the champion, this appropriation by a nation of the victory won by an individual or a team? These flags, these anthems, these banner headlines in the newspapers, screaming "We won. . . ." or "National defeat", must surely seem to us a monstrous exaggeration of the spontaneous reactions of the crowd, even a shameful exploitation of its most generous impulses. In any case, this is the opposite of catharsis: it represents a return to a primitive disposition.

I think it is high time there was an energetic reaction, including the abandonment of certain practices which have become part and parcel of the Olympic Games, either with the consent of Coubertin, such as the singing of national anthems, or in spite of him, such as classification by nations which, as we know, is not officially recognized. This is necessary if we wish to restore sport—I mean sport as a whole, including athletes, organizers and spectators—to its international vocation of promoting friendship between peoples.

From an address given by Mr. René Maheu, Director-General of UNESCO (1961-1974), to mark the centenary of Pierre de Coubertin. Paris, 28 October 1963.

Brazil: fancy footwork for survival

by Roberto DaMatta

"THERE are", so runs a popular Brazilian saying, "only three really important things in life—*cachaça*, the lottery and football." In other words, the national consensus in Brazil revolves around an alcoholic drink, which helps one to celebrate the joys or forget the sad moments of life, a game of chance based on numbers, on which are concentrated the dreams and aspirations of social advancement, and a modern sport, invented by the English and adopted by Brazilians with a passion equalled only by the skill with which they practise it.

Of the three, football is the most foreign in origin, since it was brought to Brazil by the sons of rich families who had been bitten by the football bug while in England, where they had been sent by their parents for their schooling. This was how the venerable British game of *Association Football,* re-named *futíbol,* came to be adopted by the people of Brazil and to become an abiding interest, evoking a passionate sense of both individual and national identity.

After a brief initial period of resistance, football, a pastime which combines the element of competition with free and uninhibited bodily expression, became the most popular of sports. Perhaps this was because it is a team game, incorporating the notion of a community as close-knit—a community exclusive as the household or the family and to which one is bound by unbreakable bonds of affinity, sympathy and love.

Another reason for the Brazilians' irresistible fascination with football is that it is a game played with the feet and not with the hands; this adds the further element of chance, requires of the players a high level of skill and does much to ensure the "fine uncertainty of the sport", even between unequal teams.

It is interesting to compare this with the position in the United States, where a variant of football has been adopted which involves handling the ball and requires a high degree of technical and tactical skill; this virtually eliminates any element of chance in an encounter between two unequally-matched teams. Thus the handling code makes too great a disparity between teams impracticable, which reflects, perhaps, an inclination towards that scientific rationalism, abstraction and specialization typical of societies with a strong democratic tradition.

The Brazilian touch

The use of the feet, as opposed to the hands, nevertheless entails the use of the entire body, and particularly the legs and the haunches, a part of the anatomy which, in Brazil, is, symbolically, highly-charged. For example, we say of someone who is adept at fending for himself and getting out of awkward scrapes that he is "swivel-hipped"—and this expression is equally applicable to a sly politician and to a skilful footballer.

To the Brazilians, the type of football

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"Football is a symbolic re-affirmation that the best and most skilful can win . . . that the rules of the game are the same for everyone."

played in their country is characterized by great skill in the use of both body and legs. And perhaps, in football's exclusive reliance upon the feet, there is a far-off, lingering memory of *capoeira*, an indigenous form of wrestling practised by the slaves brought over from Africa, in which only the legs and feet were used to "throw" an opponent.

Because it is a powerful force for social integration, football has become, as it were, a dramatization of many aspects of Brazilian society. It has shown that Brazilians can act together in a co-ordinated fashion to achieve victory. In fact, this kind of open, positive identification is comparatively rare in daily life in Brazil, where most institutions seem to have lost their way under economic pressures and a favours system which the average citizen finds discouraging.

Football also promotes integration in that it enables everyone to share in the experience of victory and getting on in the world, in everything that is conjured up by the magic word "success"—something that few Brazilians are likely to experience in a society with a strict hierarchy and in which wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few. The collective ecstasy of the public at the football stadium—the ecstasy of a crowd, a prey to every form of mental and physical anguish, that is body and soul behind its team and its idols—is no empty experience, since it may lead on to victory.

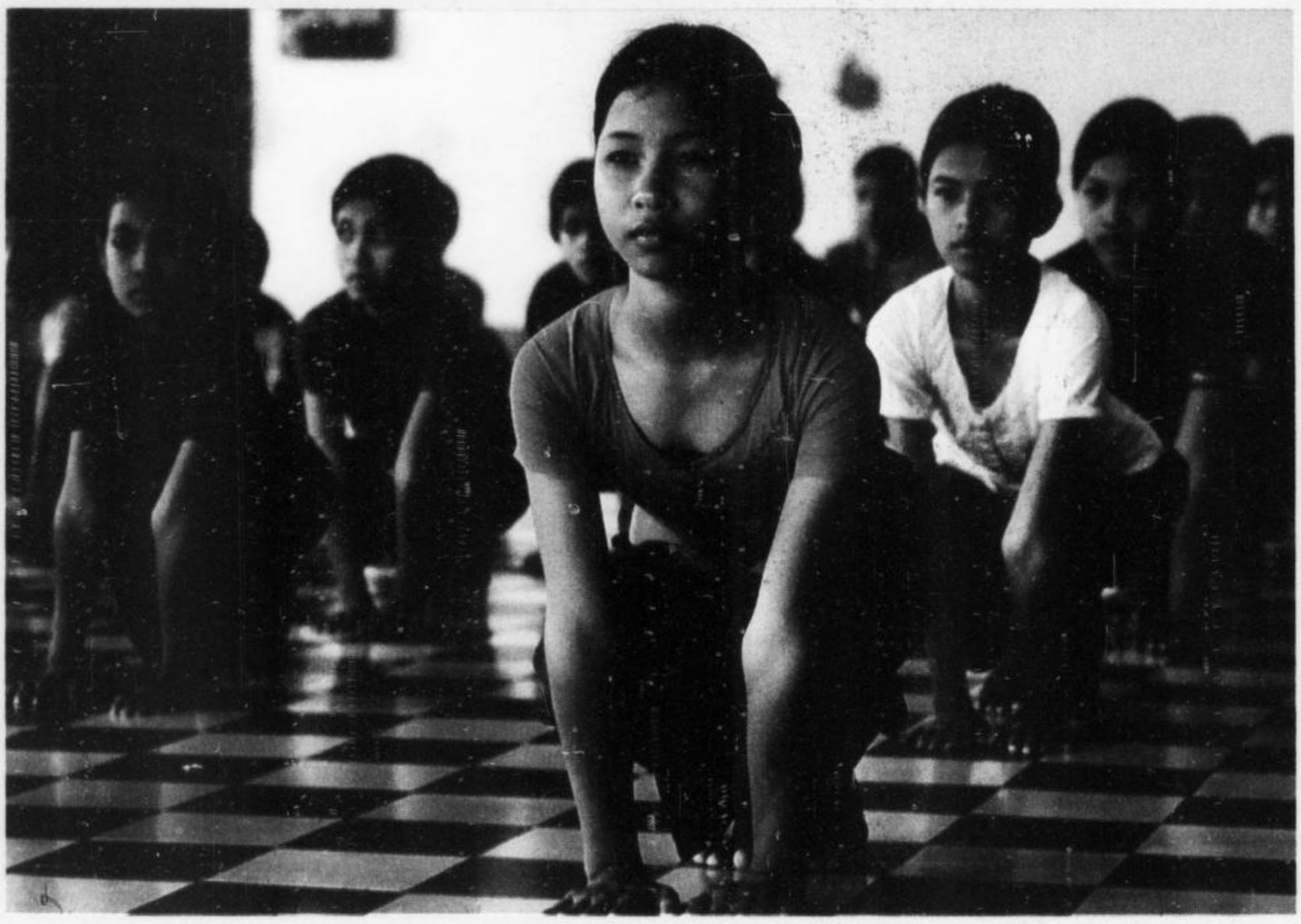
Providing a complex spectacle, yet governed by simple rules that everyone can understand, football is a symbolic re-affirmation that the best and the most skilful can win, that training, technique and a dash of luck can bring victory and, above all, that the rules of the game are the same for everyone—champions and minnows, rich clubs and poor, blacks and whites, the educated and the unlettered. In this respect football is a school of democracy and egalitarianism. As we watch our team performing in the grass arena, we know that the rules of the game are universal, that they are clear and must be respected by all, and that the referee is there to ensure that they are respected even when passions run high.

The spectator knows that, contrary to what may happen in other circumstances, neither the winners nor the losers can arbitrarily change the rules since they transcend the desires and impulses of the competing teams. Football teaches us that the very immutability of these rules is the guarantee of an alternation between winners and losers. It is precisely because of this association of the formal with the informal, of rule with reality, that in Brazil—and, indeed, throughout the Third World—football has become an unparalleled focus of the emotions.

At all events, it is through football that Brazilians have, at last, come to identify with such symbols of the nation-state as traditions, the national anthem and the flag. It is through this sport—in which heart and head, strength and ingenuity are allied and which gave us "fancy footwork" (which we all need to survive) as a national expression—through football that Brazil exists as a society and as a nation. Yes, it was the wonderful, staggering experience of winning three World Cups that gave us confidence in the creativity and generous spirit of the Brazilian people. ❐

Agile legwork is a feature of the *capoeira*, a form of wrestling which originated in Africa and has given its name to a dance popular in northeastern Brazil.

UNESCO AND SPORT



A gymnastics class at Phnom Penh (Cambodia).

UNESCO is the only organization in the United Nations system whose mandate covers the whole range of problems relating to the international development of physical education and sport. Other institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) have responsibilities in this field, but only in specific areas relating to their constitutional competence—sport and health and sport in working life.

The broad thrust of UNESCO's activities in the field of sport is as follows:

■ UNESCO supports intergovernmental machinery concerned with the institutional and normative aspects of sport. In 1978, UNESCO's General Conference adopted an International Charter and created an Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport. At the same time, an International Fund for the Development of Physical Education and Sport (FIDEPS) was established. In view of the gradual disengagement of states which consider that sport generates sufficient resources to be self-financing, the statutes of the Fund now enable representatives of the private sector to sit on its Governing Board.

In 1988 an international conference of ministers responsible for physical education and sport, held in Moscow, assessed the world situation in this field and noted the emergence of new forms of co-operation and partnership between official and voluntary organizations. The Conference approved a series of eleven recommendations, which provided a conceptual framework for action, as well as a text entitled the Moscow Declaration, which contains ten proposals of a general nature. A joint declaration was adopted by UNESCO and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) which defined common objectives for the two organizations.

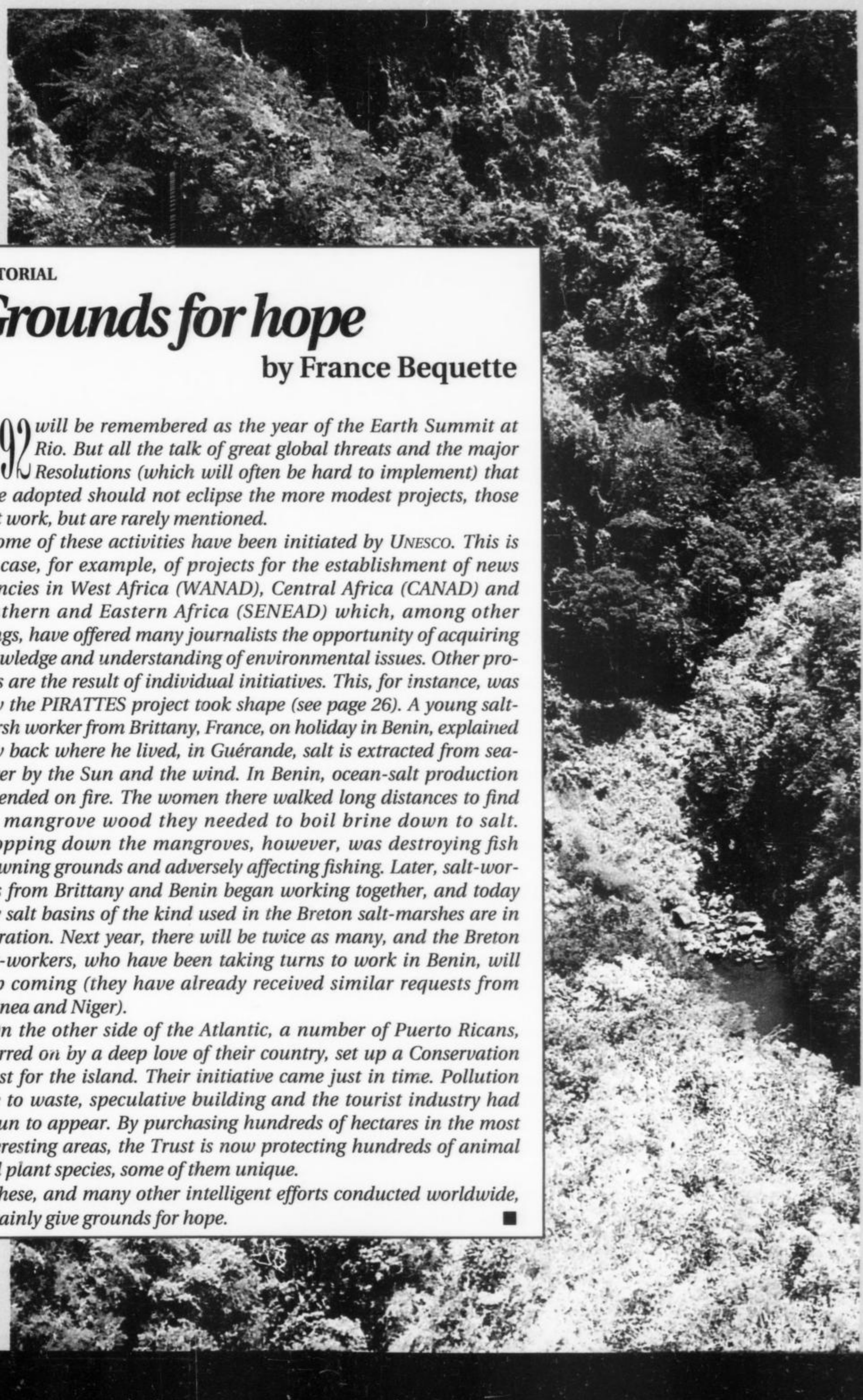
■ In order to reduce disparities between countries in physical education and sport, various activities have been and continue to be carried out in co-operation with non-governmental organizations, and especially with the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education. The purpose of these activities is:

a) to encourage access to and participation in physical education and sports of children and adolescents in the school system and in the framework of non-formal education programmes;
b) to promote the practice of sport for all;
c) to train educators at the national, regional and international levels;
d) to organize annual international physical activity weeks which may form part of a broader and more systematic programme entitled *Fitness for Everybody;*
e) to encourage the development of research in sport science and the international exchange of information through the creation of specialized facilities.

■ A third range of activities is designed to safeguard and protect the ethical values of sport: fair play, harmonious self-fulfilment, the desire to surpass oneself, solidarity, team spirit, self-sacrifice, loyalty, generosity, respect for the rules and for one's adversaries, mastery of aggression and violence. These values are today threatened by forces outside sport which are tending to reduce sport to a money-making activity and are leading to bitter and in some cases even fatal confrontations. They cannot be maintained by decree, even though decrees and regulations can be useful and even indispensable. This is a task which society as a whole must shoulder through the self-development that education provides. Physical games take their meaning from the mental climate in which they are played. ❐

GREENWATCH

THE UNESCO COURIER - DECEMBER 1992



EDITORIAL

Grounds for hope

by France Bequette

1992 will be remembered as the year of the Earth Summit at Rio. But all the talk of great global threats and the major Resolutions (which will often be hard to implement) that were adopted should not eclipse the more modest projects, those that work, but are rarely mentioned.

Some of these activities have been initiated by UNESCO. This is the case, for example, of projects for the establishment of news agencies in West Africa (WANAD), Central Africa (CANAD) and Southern and Eastern Africa (SENEAD) which, among other things, have offered many journalists the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. Other projects are the result of individual initiatives. This, for instance, was how the PIRATTES project took shape (see page 26). A young salt-marsh worker from Brittany, France, on holiday in Benin, explained how back where he lived, in Guérande, salt is extracted from sea-water by the Sun and the wind. In Benin, ocean-salt production depended on fire. The women there walked long distances to find the mangrove wood they needed to boil brine down to salt. Chopping down the mangroves, however, was destroying fish spawning grounds and adversely affecting fishing. Later, salt-workers from Brittany and Benin began working together, and today fifty salt basins of the kind used in the Breton salt-marshes are in operation. Next year, there will be twice as many, and the Breton salt-workers, who have been taking turns to work in Benin, will stop coming (they have already received similar requests from Guinea and Niger).

On the other side of the Atlantic, a number of Puerto Ricans, spurred on by a deep love of their country, set up a Conservation Trust for the island. Their initiative came just in time. Pollution due to waste, speculative building and the tourist industry had begun to appear. By purchasing hundreds of hectares in the most interesting areas, the Trust is now protecting hundreds of animal and plant species, some of them unique.

These, and many other intelligent efforts conducted worldwide, certainly give grounds for hope. ■

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THE TOXIC AVENGERS

Toxic waste sites are more often found among poor communities than in affluent districts. Most of the 4,000 residents of Williamsburg, a working-class neighbourhood in the northeastern part of Brooklyn, are from the Caribbean and Central America. A report by the Community Environmental Health Center at New York's Hunter College revealed that at least twenty-eight sites in the Williamsburg area stored dangerous, often "extremely dangerous", toxic wastes. Four years ago, a number of high school and college students got together and organized an action group which they called "The Toxic Avengers". They discovered an empty lot littered with drums oozing toxic liquids and called in environmental agencies to clean it up. Since then, the group has continued its battle and undertaken community-awareness actions, teaching that combating pollution should be a priority just like fighting drugs and crime. ■

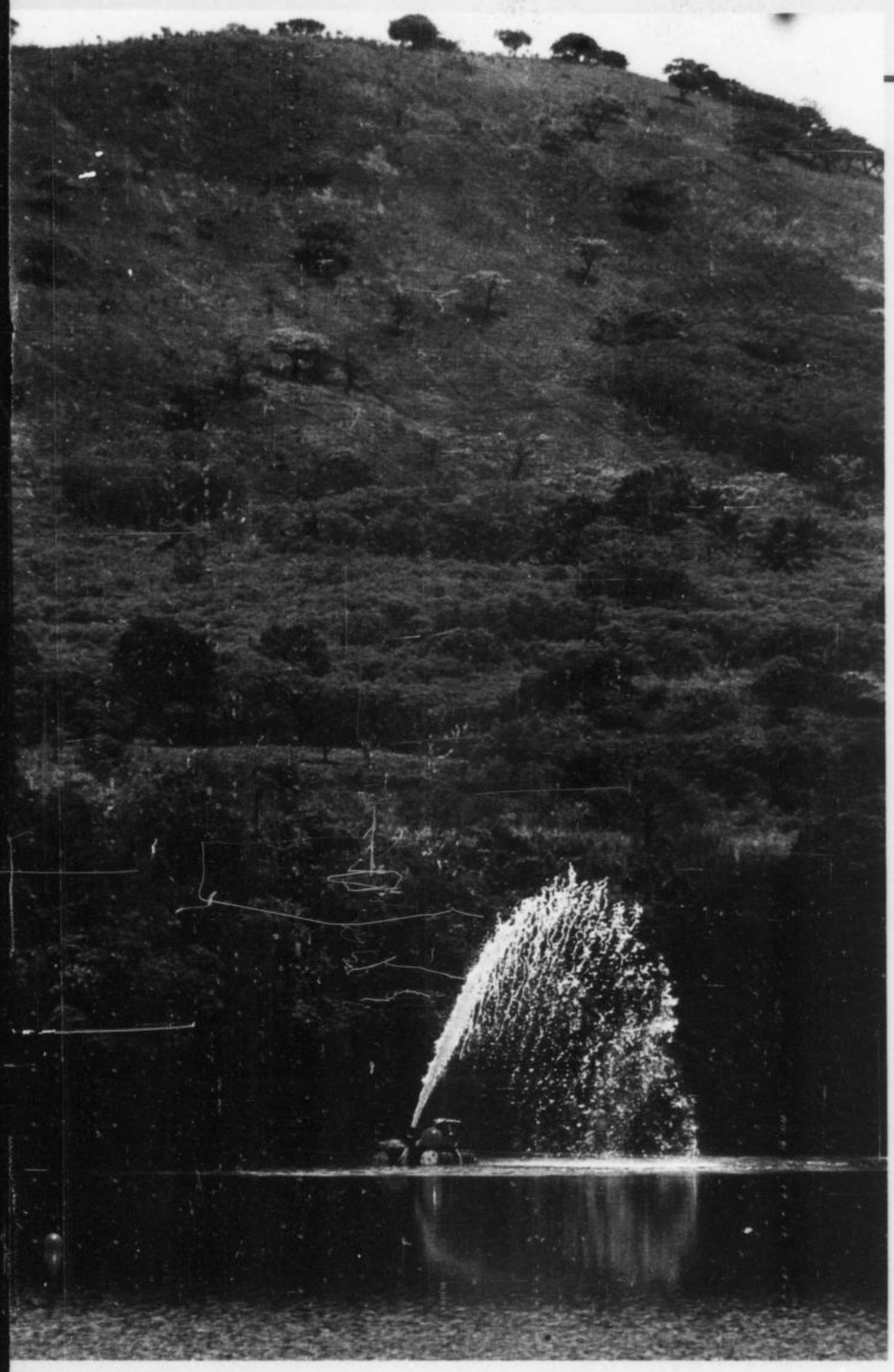
SHOULD HAZARDOUS WASTES HAVE TO TRAVEL?

The 1989 Basel Convention designed to control the cross-border movement and disposal of hazardous wastes came into force on 5 May 1992. The Convention stipulates that the importing country must be provided with detailed information on the nature of the wastes and be in a position to treat them. Such is the case in France, which at Saint-Vulbas, in the Ain department, has a plant, the only one of its kind in the world, that can destroy PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) without causing any pollution, thanks to a 1,200°C incinerator. The environmental organization Greenpeace brought pressure to bear on the French government to prevent PCBs imported from Australia for destruction in this facility. But if borders are closed and each state is obliged to build such expensive, high-tech plants, is there not a risk that more toxic wates will be illegally dumped in natural sites? ■

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD PRODUCTION

For the past thirty years, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been one of the world's largest sources of funding for activities in developing countries aimed at reversing environmental degradation and increasing agricultural productivity in sustainable ways. In 1991 WFP, which was set up in 1961 by the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), undertook a review of its environmental activities. The review points out that environmentally sustainable development must also be economically and socially sustainable. In other words it must be based on the willingness of local people to participate in development activities in a way that allows for them to be sustained once external resources are no longer provided. ■

For further information, please contact WFP, Via Cristoforo Colombo 426, 00145 Rome, Italy.



CAMEROON'S KILLER LAKES

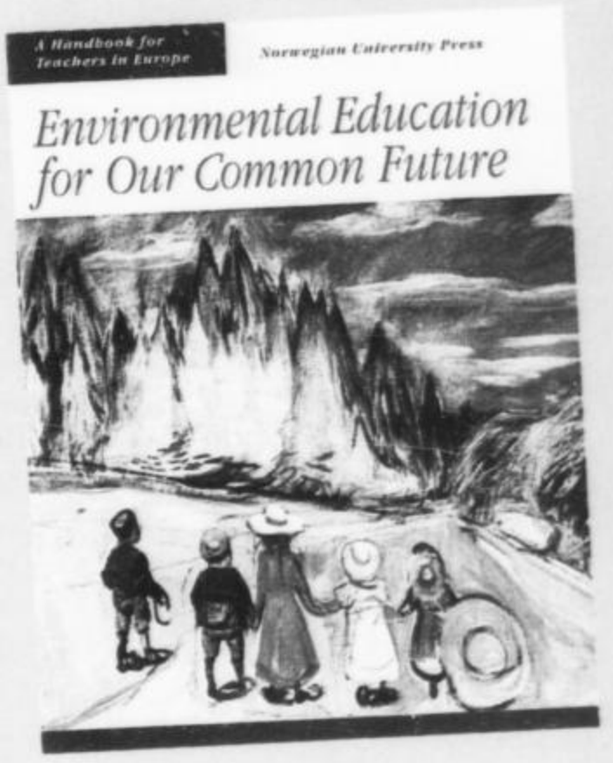
During the night of 21 to 22 August 1986, Lake Nyos, located on the volcanic rim in western Cameroon, disgorged a vast cloud of toxic gas which took the lives of about 1,700 people and thousands of cattle. Two years earlier, on 16 August 1984, a similar disaster had taken place 100 kilometres away at Lake Monoun, causing thirty-seven deaths. In 1987, on UNESCO's initiative, more than 200 research workers and experts met for a conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to try to understand the causes of these incidents. Had there been a sudden total or partial degasification of the water? If so, was this due to a landslide, a rockslip, a violent wind or to an upwelling of deep water? Or had a volcanic disturbance released the gases from a subsurface reservoir? A team from the University of Savoy, France, is working on a project to bring the remaining water-trapped gas to the surface through a system of pipes. The quantities involved are estimated to be 250 million cubic metres for Lake Nyos, and 9.4 million for Lake Monoun. To avoid another disaster, experts have set up a buoy equipped with a satellite-transmission device, a seismic monitoring system and meteorological measurement platforms. In addition, 4,000 people have been relocated at a safe distance from the two lakes. ■

PROTECTING THE GALLERY FORESTS OF SÃO PAULO STATE

The Brazilian state of São Paulo has only been able to conserve three per cent of its natural vegetation cover, and erosion has caused the loss of 200 million tonnes of soil. Such sorry figures have led to a programme for the restoration of gallery forests in the Jacare Pepira basin, under the direction of Carlos Joly of the University of Campinas. In recent decades, sugar-cane fields, orange groves, grazing land, leisure areas and hydroelectric dam sites have made inroads into gallery forests along the Jacare Pepina river and its tributaries. So far, 250 hectares have been reforested with the help of landowners and municipal authorities. ■

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR OUR COMMON FUTURE

A remarkable book, *Environmental Education for Our Common Future*, has just been published jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme, UNESCO and Norway. Designed as a handbook for teachers throughout Europe from kindergarten to secondary school, it reports, in Part I, on the current ecological state of the planet. Part II presents examples of environmental education projects in schools all over Europe, illustrated with figures and photographs. The handbook is a source of useful and innovative educational suggestions for all teachers, whatever subject they teach. It is available from UNESCO, in English only. ■



THE SALT OF THE EARTH: SUN, WIND, AND FIRE

by France Bequette

HOLLOWED out of tree-trunks, the pirogues lie at rest on the silvery-grey sand beneath the whispering, shiny-leafed coconut palms. Children play around huts made of *banco*, a mixture of clay and bamboo, and roofed with leaves. This is Houakpé, a village on the Atlantic coast of Benin, some sixty kilometres west of Cotonou, near Ouidah, and not far from the Togolese border. In January 1988, Alain Courtel spent his holiday in Benin, but it was not mere chance that brought him to Houakpé. Back home in Guérande, a small French town in the department of Loire-Atlantique, Alain had spent fifteen years working in the salt-marshes and he knew the Atlantic ocean had two "salt peoples" specializing in ocean-salt extraction—his fellow citizens of Guérande and the people in the Ouidah area. He was also extremely interested in the environment and development.

Alain Courtel brought with him addresses, postcards of the Guérande marshes and a densimeter. He toured the villages, collected information and met Matthias Toffi, a geographer who had left university to work in the field. He learned that the region was very poor, that fishing was in decline, that the women of the village were worn out by the exhausting labour of salt extraction, and that supplies of the fuelwood used in the salt-extraction process were running out.

Courtel was surprised to learn that salt extraction should need any wood at all. Apparently, the methods used locally were very different from those he knew. In Guérande, sea-water brought in by high tides is channelled into shallow reservoirs through a system of small conduits. The water then heats up and some of it evaporates. The remaining solution, which has a higher salt concentration, is fed by gravity into a second basin and finally ends up in "crystallizing pans". The salt is gathered daily from June to October. Each pan yields an average of one tonne of salt. In Guérande, about 200 salt-marsh workers produce 10,000 tonnes of salt per year, sometimes twice that amount in good years, like 1989. This is achieved using hardly any tools and without harming the environment in any way.

In Benin, the centuries-old salt-production tradition seemed perfectly satisfactory, but it turned out to have a devastating impact on the environment. In the dry season, the Ouéoué lagoon recedes completely. During that period, while the men go fishing, the women scrape up the salt-permeated soil, put it into large baskets and then rinse the earth-and-salt mixture several times with water. An orange-coloured brine collects in bowls or calabashes placed under the baskets. This is then poured into a large pot built into an "improved stove", that is, one that needs much less fuel because it has only one opening for the introduction of wood.

There may be as many as three stoves under the roof of a single, dark hut. Outside the heat is intense, inside it is unbearable. Yet the women and the children stand over the boiling liquid, stirring it with sticks, so that the water evaporates more quickly. "It takes three hours of boiling to get four kilos of salt," explained Toffi. To produce 135 kilograms of salt means burning one cubic metre of wood.

The best wood, the kind that burns slowly and generates practically no ashes, comes from mangroves. These strange-looking swamp-trees with their exposed, stilt-like roots reaching down into the muddy swamp water form a forest fringe along the shoreline and provide a spawning ground for the fish that dart in and out of the tangle of their roots. By the time Courtel visited the region, however, the mangroves were so depleted that the women had either to walk six to ten kilometres to fetch wood, or to buy bundles of firewood for a small fortune compared to the price that could be obtained for the salt. About 2,000 people, mostly women, were producing from one to one and a half tonnes per family annually.

Courtel told Toffi about Guérande. "Where I live, in Brittany," he explained, "they say salt is born of the sun and the wind. . . . Here, it is born of fire". Realizing all the advantages of eliminating the use of wood—the mangrove swamp would be renewed and the fish would return—Toffi agreed to carry out an experiment.

In the summer of 1988, the PIRATTES project was launched. PIRATTES stands for *Projet intégré de recherches sur l'amélioration des*

Below, salt is produced from brine by solar evaporation at the village of Kpablé (Benin). Bottom, pans of brine are heated on wood stoves.

Air view of salt concentration ponds and (top right) crystallizing pans at Guérande (France).

techniques traditionnelles d'extraction de sel, which is French for "integrated research project on the improvement of traditional salt-extraction techniques". The project was financed by the French Co-operation Mission, the French Ministry of Co-operation, the French Anti-Hunger Committee, the Fondation de France and the region of La Baule, in Brittany, France. In charge of the project were the Guérande salt producers' group, the Benin scientific and technical research centre and the Association of Volunteers for Progress—a splendid example of North-South co-operation founded in friendship and seeking simple solutions adapted both to the environment and to the conditions of local daily life. Alain Courtel went home to Brittany to tend to his crop of salt, and came back to Benin in October for a five-month stay, bringing a fellow salt-marsh worker with him.

The first step was to meet the Dagbo Hou-non, high priest of the sea and chief of the voodoo medicine men. Escorted by Toffi, Courtel introduced himself as a "servant of salt", and received a favourable welcome. The next step was to get down to work. He began by digging two small basins in the village of Lanhou, located at Boca del Rio, the mouth of the river. This was no simple task. The clay content of the soil, which was different from the soil in Guérande, was not homogeneous. There were other problems: the air humidity, the lightness of the wind, the irregular flow of the tides, variation in the salinity of the lagoon water, and the tunnels made by little sea-crabs known as *toklins*.

These difficulties were compounded by those inherent in any *yovo* (White) project in Africa. Geneviève Delbos, ethnologist at the French National Scientific Research Centre, who followed the experiment, explains: "The work progressed in fits and starts due to the fact that the salt-marsh workers had to learn to adapt to both the physical and the human environment in which this collaborative effort was taking place. This was exacerbated by the complexity of human relationships in a culture where personal joys and sorrows and social and natural upheavals are always given a traditional interpretation in terms of the occult forces at play that are manipulated by those who have the fearsome—and feared—power of 'commanding' them."

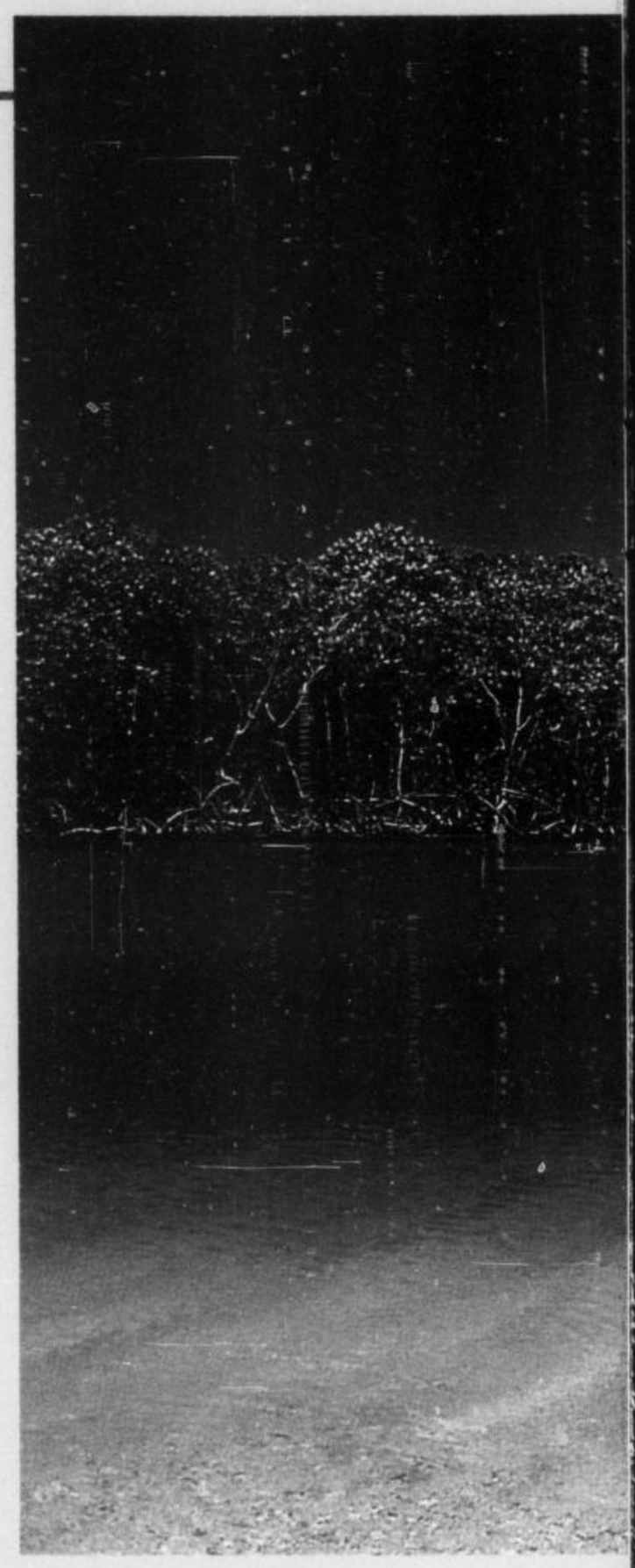
Benin is the cradle of voodoo, a magical country where, probably more than anywhere else in Africa, conciliation with the supernatural is indispensable. One night, the lagoon was suddenly breached, leaving a gap through which the ocean rushed in, flooding the salt basins. The first month's work was ruined. There was only one solution left—to fill the salt basins with the brine the women had collected from under their large baskets full of salty earth. The two technologies combined beautifully.

Not everybody was totally convinced, however. Marguerite, a midwife who gathers salt when she is not delivering babies, was sceptical. We met her on a small island in the lagoon, with two shallow basins near the hut containing the furnace that Marguerite's son fired with dried palm leaves. One of the basins was lined with a sheet of bright blue plastic, the other with a thick layer of clay. She picked up a fistful of crystals that had formed in two months: "The white man comes, he tells you what to do, then he goes away. We don't like this salt, it's too coarse. It has to be ground." All the same, she had agreed to try the system. But she was too tired to attend the big party PIRATTES threw in March to celebrate the first bag of salt produced as a result of the co-operative effort.

The following week, the Dagbo Hou-non himself came to visit. He was given an offering of *djè*, which is "salt" in Fon, one of the most widely spoken languages in Benin. He took the opportunity to remind everybody that the lagoon forests were holy and called on the voodoo spirits to be kindly disposed to PIRATTES. In 1992, the association was honoured with the *Technologie sans frontières* award, the highest prize offered in the Enterprise and Environment competition organized by the Commission of the European Communities. ■

FRANCE BEQUETTE
is a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions. Since 1985 she has been associated with the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news-agency journalists.

PUERTO RICO SAVES ITS TREASURES



"THE Lord must have worked overtime to create such a beautiful island," say the Puerto Ricans. Indeed, all its 3.5 million inhabitants seem to be passionately attached to this tiny (8,897 sq km) island, formed by volcanic eruptions more than 120 million years ago.

Puerto Rico is the smallest and the most easterly of the islands that comprise the Greater Antilles, lying about 100 kilometres east of the Dominican Republic. It was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 and remained a Spanish possession until 1898, when, following the Treaty of Paris which ended the brief Spanish American War, it became a commonwealth associated with the United States. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens with a special status. They are exempt from federal income taxes, and their official language is Spanish.

Puerto Rico began to industrialize its historically agricultural economy just fifty years ago with a programme called "Bootstrap", *Fomento* in Spanish, which was launched to enable the Puerto Ricans to take their destiny into their own hands. Pharmaceutical products and the production of electronic and scientific instruments are major components of the economy. However, there is an unemployment rate of 16 per cent. More than half the families are on U.S. food stamps, and 2.5 million Puerto Ricans seek jobs and cash on the U.S. mainland.

A passenger on a plane coming in to land at San Juan airport sees Puerto Rico as a green rectangle in a turquoise-blue sea, a paradise of white beaches lined with coconut trees. However, Puerto Rico is a paradise not only for tourists but for archaeologists, botanists, and ornithologists as well. The first archaeological excavations revealed traces of Indian groups from northeastern South America dating from the beginning of the Christian era—pottery, small clay masks, and rock-carvings. The natural environment also offers fascinating research material, including more than 3,000 plant species, 232 kinds of birds, and numerous reptiles and amphibians. Many of these plants and animals are endemic to the island, and some are found nowhere else in the world.

On 24 December 1968, the Governor of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and the Administrator of the Economic Development Administration decided to take action to preserve the island's endangered treasures. They created a Conservation Trust, to be endowed through contributions from petroleum companies operating on the island and through private, U.S. tax-deductible charitable donations.

It was not a moment too soon. The San Cristóbal Canyon, which

Children dip into the "touch tank" in the demonstration room at the Las Cabezas de San Juan Nature Reserve as part of an educational programme run by the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico.

The Punta Ballena Biosphere Reserve at Guánica (Puerto Rico).

cuts through the heart of the island's central mountain range like the stroke of a sword, was being used as a waste dump by neighbouring towns piling up debris and car wrecks. Dump fires were a regular occurrence. In 1974, the Trust bought nearly 500 hectares along the northern rim of the Canyon and gradually cleaned it up, restoring it to the red-tailed hawk and other wildlife. The Trust now plans to purchase adjacent tracts of land along the southern rim and to clear and mark out a system of trails to enable visitors to discover and learn about the site's environment and its wild inhabitants.

Punta Ballena, in the southwest of the island, was threatened not by waste but by development as a tourist site. The setting, a forest of mangroves and coves bordering the Guánica State coastal dry forest, represents such a unique and beautiful ecosystem that, in 1985, UNESCO decided to declare it a Biosphere Reserve. After purchase from the *Club Méditerranée* tourist organization of the eighty hectares of forest, the Trust turned this site into a protected habitat for endangered species such as the crested toad, the Puerto Rican night-jar, the yellow-shouldered blackbird, the manatee, and the hawksbill turtle.

Further along the coast, to the west, the threat to the *Bahia Fosforescente* (Phosphorescent Bay) of La Parguera came not only from tourism, but also from housing development. On dark nights, bio-luminescent micro-organisms, *Pyrodinium bahamensis*, transform the bay into a sea of fire. Because of the central hills and mountains of the island, the population tends to press into a narrow plain along the coastline. Had the Trust not acquired it, the Las Cabezas de San Juan Nature Reserve would also be a parking area today.

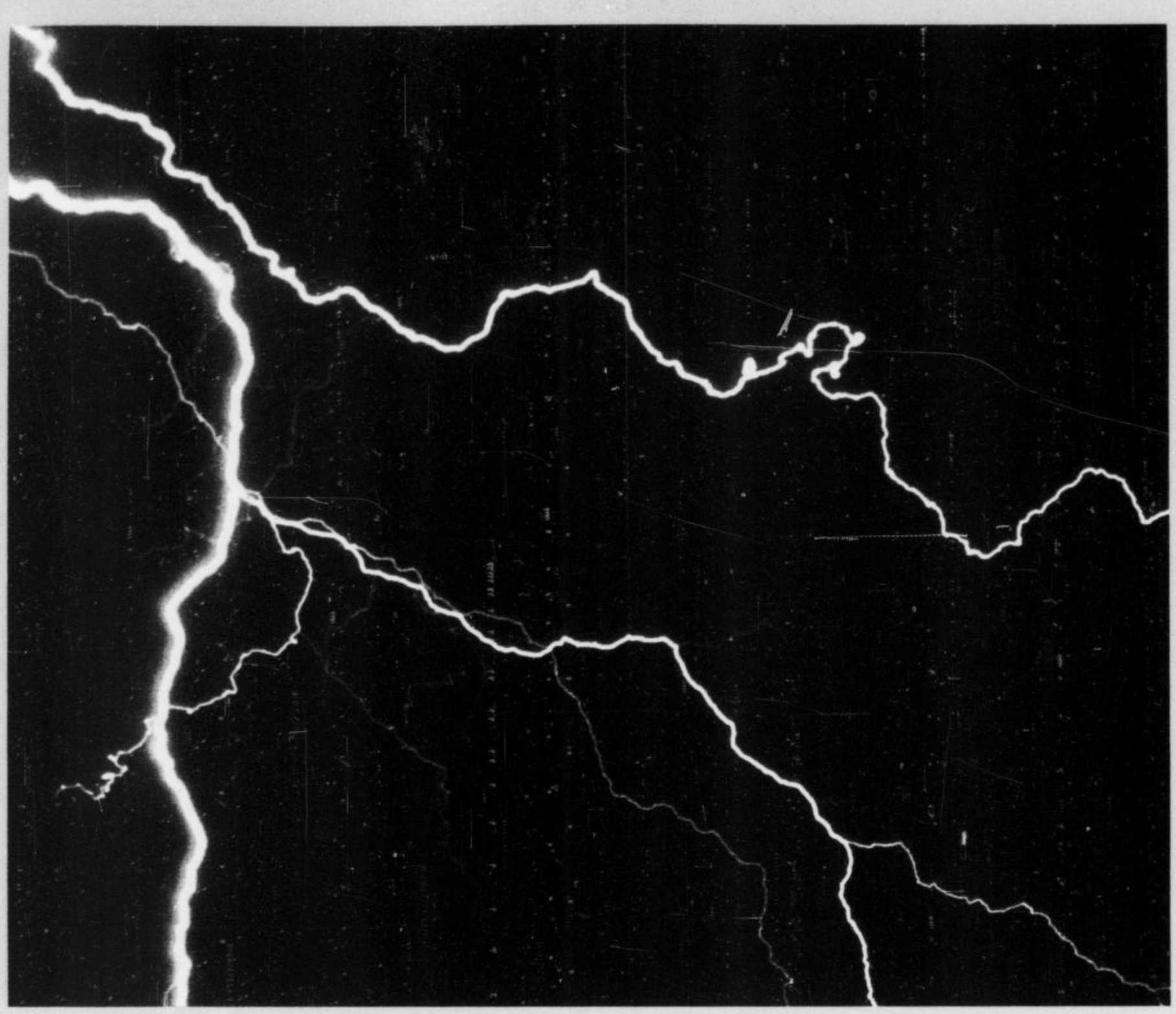
Another 150-hectare site, in the southwest of the island, was saved by the Trust from the clutches of speculative developers to become the Inés María Mendoza de Muñoz Marín Reserve. This landscape of pastures and tree-lined sandstone cliffs is home to the grasshopper sparrow, the Puerto Rican bullfinch, the black-whiskered vireo, and the American kestrel.

In the eastern part of the island is another feature of great ecological importance, the Pterocarpus Forest. Its trees, also called "coral wood" because of their red sap, have wide roots which reach down into the marshy soil. In 1990, the Trust purchased a 350-hectare stretch of this forest, which is now under its protection.

Although industrialized, densely populated and urbanized, Puerto Rico gives the impression of being an oasis, with limited pollution. The air is always clean thanks to the trade winds, and environmental conservation has become a major concern. The Conservation Trust is well-managed and effective. The island could very well be a model to other regions of the world.

■

Voices from the past



THE BROTHER AND SISTER WHO BECAME THUNDER AND LIGHTNING

A LEGEND OF THE CARIBOU ESKIMOS*

THE Inuit (widely known as Eskimos) live widely dispersed in the Arctic regions of Alaska, Greenland and Canada, but are united by language and culture. Their literature, transmitted by the oral tradition, and their remarkable plastic art, bear witness to a profound harmony between the people and their environment.

■ The text on this page has been taken from *Compagnons du Soleil* ("Companions of the Sun"), an anthology of writing on the relationship between humankind and nature co-published by UNESCO, Editions de la Découverte (Paris) and the Fondation pour le progrès de l'Homme. The anthology, which appeared in November 1992, was prepared under the general editorship of Joseph Ki-Zerbo, in collaboration with Marie-Josèphe Beaud-Gambier.

In the earliest times, there were no thieves among mankind; but then one day it happened during a song festival, that a brother and sister were left alone in a house, and here they found a caribou skin with the hair off, and a firestone. These they stole, but hardly had they stolen them when a great fear of their fellows came upon them.

"What shall we do to get away from everyone?" said one.

"Let us turn into caribou," said the other.

"Then people will kill us."

"Let us turn into foxes."

And so they went through all animals in turn, and always they were afraid people would kill them. But then one said:

"Let us turn into thunder and lightning, and then people will not be able to catch us."

And so they turned into thunder and lightning and went up into the sky. When there is thunder and lightning now, it is because one of them rattles the dry caribou skin, while the other strikes sparks from the firestone.

(As told by Anarquil G.)

* From *Intellectual culture of the Caribou Eskimos: Iglulik and Caribou Eskimo texts*, by Knud Rasmussen, Copenhagen, 1930.

Doping—a shadow over sport

by Miguel Angel Bermúdez Escobar

LEGEND has it that, once upon a time, a young hunter from the north of what was to be known much later as the continent of America went to ask the medicine man for a magic formula which would make him the fastest and most cunning hunter in the tribe. The medicine man told him: "Catch the first monarch butterfly you see at the beginning of the summer and rub the gold dust from its wings on your chest, and you will become as light as it is." The hunter did as he was told and was soon darting along as swiftly as the brilliant-hued butterfly.

We also know that the gladiators of Ancient Rome ate the raw flesh of wild animals in order to absorb the animals' strength and ferocity, and that in Greece the dust and sweat from wrestlers' bodies were used to make a tonic prized by their admirers and would-be rivals, who believed that it would pass on to them the vitality and bravery of their idols.

We know from accounts left by the early

Drawing by Blachon.

chroniclers of the New World that the pre-Columbian civilizations were familiar with the properties of plants used for curative or ritual purposes. The Mexican Indians enlisted by Hernán Cortés took *peyotl* during their exhausting route marches, and the Indians of the Andean regions of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia chewed the leaves of the *Erythroxylon coca* shrub in order to stave off hunger and fatigue. Coca leaves were so widely used that they eventually became a form of currency known as "cocada".

During the Second World War, special rations were distributed to troops in order to help them fight cold and fatigue and to prepare for combat. Cannabis and other psychotropic substances were widely used by American soldiers in Viet Nam.

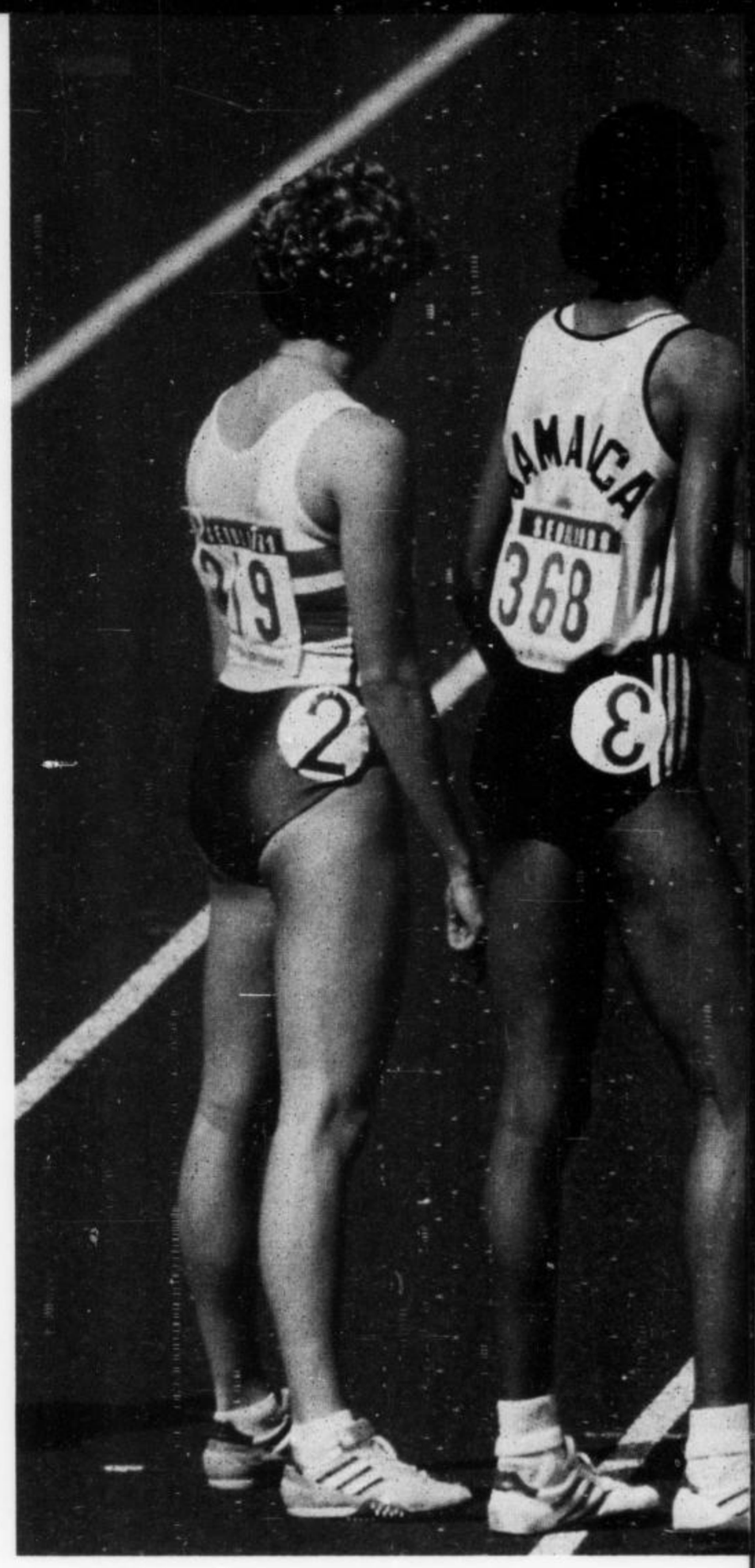
It is not known precisely when these practices spread to sport—although it is certain that people in every age have sought to improve their performance and sharpen their physical and mental faculties. Certainly they have become increasingly sophisticated with the progress of science, and notably with the development of amphetamines and anabolizing drugs.

A CONJURING TRICK

Even today, it is not easy to draw the line between the physiological action of substances which are capable of stimulating the body's functions, and what is known as the placebo effect—the psychological impact and the element of auto-suggestion that accompany all forms of medication.

The magical power of primitive rituals is not altogether absent from modern sport. Trainers and athletes alike admit that psychological factors such as self-confidence, motivation, and the will to win, all have a decisive influence on results. "Neutral" foodstuffs, vitamins or injections may have an extremely beneficial effect if competitors are convinced that they are effective. Substances of this kind are sometimes used to upset other competitors, as when athletes in the United States team at the Olympic Games in Mexico City made a great show of inhaling draughts of oxygen and when, in one particular case, a runner put his opponents off their stride before the start of a race just by lifting a perfectly harmless pill to his mouth.

The result of a sporting competition depends on a range of factors, including the athletes' physical condition, their standard of training, tactical skills, and psychological state. Nowadays, when the results achieved in competition are often only a hair's breadth apart, electronic devices have to be used to measure them. Hence, it is hard to know which of these factors is responsible for a winning performance, and it is even harder to tell whether the additive effect of doping really has anything to do with it. And supposing that doping does help to improve the athlete's performance, how is it possible to distinguish the placebo effect from that of the chemical substance itself?



The American runner Florence Griffith-Joyner (far right) hoping for victory before the start of the women's 400-metre relay at the Seoul Olympics, 1988.

I am convinced that if it were possible to isolate the effect of each of these factors, doping would be found to be so counter-productive that no sane athlete or trainer would follow a practice that runs counter to ethics and is bad for the health.

VICTORY AT ANY PRICE

We all want to win because these days victory is the key to happiness, to the earthly paradise. Success at all costs is the motto of our modern world.

It would have been surprising if sport had managed to steer clear of this obsession. The fact is that the determination to win at any price has corrupted the sense of sportsmanship which Baron Pierre de Coubertin wished to infuse into the Olympic Games when he said in 1908 that the main thing was not to win but to take part.

Why does this mentality exist? Is it because of the sheer pleasure that people feel at winning, at coming first? We all know that this is

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not so. The great principles that informed sport only a few decades ago have given way to less noble ones that are more in tune with the consumer society in which we live.

Sporting success now offers material rewards that bear no relation to the benefits of sport as visualized by the Ancient Greeks or by those who, with Pierre de Coubertin, laid the foundations of modern sport. In addition, some of those who profit from the exploits of athletes urge them to use, to the detriment of their health, drugs that are capable of boosting their short-term performance but invariably take a heavy toll later on.

These pressures, coupled with personal ambition and the demands of team-mates, sporting and commercial organizations, and society at large, come to carry more weight than warnings about the risks of doping and even the prohibitions spelt out in the rule-book.

An ethical problem

Sporting champions, then, are faced with the awkward dilemma of whether to use drugs or other stimulants to improve their performance or whether to abstain and accept that their opponents who do use them will have the edge over them.

The advocates of doping use a battery of arguments. They claim that the consequences of drug-taking are less serious than the irreversible and sometimes even mortal injuries caused by the practice of sport itself, or that there is no difference between taking drugs to cure illness and using them to improve performance in sport. None of these arguments is very convincing. All of them conveniently gloss over the ethical dimension of the problem.

Doping, like any other fraudulent practice that purports to give an artificial boost to people's physical potential, runs counter to the very nature of sport, since it denies athletes a chance to excel through their own unaided endeavours. By giving an unfair advantage to one competitor over the others, it violates the elementary rules of competitive sport. It corrupts athletes morally and physically, undermines their mental balance and the image society has of them. It sullies the image of sport and casts a shadow over sporting events. ❐

Fallen stars

by Aleksei Srebnitsky

THE other day a parcel arrived for me from the United States at the address of what was once the Novosti news agency, where I worked for thirty years. Stephanie Vogel of Seattle had discovered from my articles in *Soviet Life* that I was an old friend of Valery Brumel, her favourite sportsman, and asked me whether I could send her some Brumel memorabilia—postcards, catalogues, badges, commemorative medals and suchlike. Her parcel also contained a few ounces of sliced dry sausage in a plastic packet, with the following accompanying note: "I hope this will be of some comfort to you, Brumel, in these times of shortage."

Stephanie Vogel's gesture was not quite as cranky as it may seem at first sight. In *Soviet Life* I had chronicled the problems of the former Olympic high-jump champion (1964) after serious injury had prevented him from pursuing his career in top-level competition. Once a Soviet national hero, Brumel found himself out of a job almost overnight. He was no longer needed. Through a combination of optimism and resourcefulness, he eventually managed to survive by giving lectures and publishing his autobiography. But by then he had been through some very hard times indeed, sometimes having to rely on the money he got from returnable bottles at twelve kopeks a time to pay for his next meal. It was only after Gorbachev had introduced perestroika that Brumel was able to draw a disablement benefit of 110 roubles a month. With that sort of income, the ex-world-record-holder was certainly not going to turn his nose up at the sausage sent by his American fan.

There is nothing particularly unusual about this story in the Soviet context. As long as champions earn medals—and foreign currency—for their country they are supported by the state and fêted by the media. But the moment they fail to make the grade they are left to their own devices. If they are accommodating and know how to please their superiors, they can hope to land a job as a trainer or administrator. But if they are independent-minded, like Brumel, they can expect no support. That is why, for many years, Soviet sportsmen who were able to travel abroad often resorted to smuggling on a grand scale so as to have something to put away for a rainy day.

An athlete's career is a short one. The physical effort required, unrelenting pressure and psychological stress inevitably result in serious traumas and premature ageing. There is some truth in the joke about beer being better for the health than sport. By the age of twenty-three, young sports "veteran" Brumel had already had a cartilage operation for a complaint that is common among high jumpers. But not all athletes were lucky enough to get patched up in this way. The only ones who got help were those still capable of winning events and breaking records. The legendary triple-jump champion, Victor Saneyev, world record-holder and Olympic champion in 1968 and 1976, was even sent to Finland for treatment. When necessary, the Sports Ministry paid in hard currency. It was just too bad for those who were past their peak.

The sad story of Vladimir Kissilev

We Russians are only just beginning to admit, to our embarrassment, that the craze for drug-taking, an activity once described as "the result of bourgeois habits," also swept the Soviet Union, the world's "leading worker and peasant state." At the 1980 Moscow Olympics—which were once hailed as "outstanding" and are now regarded as "shameful"—the Soviet Union took advantage of its status as host nation to drug its sportsmen as never before. In athletics alone, it swept the board with fifteen gold medals, a suspiciously high success rate even in the absence of the Americans. Some of the medal-winners had never been heard of before the Games—and were immediately forgotten afterwards.

Vladimir Kissilev astonished everyone by winning the shot-put event. He then completely vanished from the public eye. Only recently did his sad fate come to light. Drugs had taken their toll: the ex-champion became an invalid and several times came close to death. He eventually managed to pull through, but the athletics officials who had earned laurels and well-paid jobs as a result of his exploits did not lift a finger to help him.

As for the celebrated ice-hockey player Victor Yakushev, he owed his salvation to a sympathetic foreign sportsman. At the end of his playing career he became a trainer and enjoyed a relatively comfortable position. But a few years later his former injuries manifested themselves again. In the course of an outstanding career, Yakushev had broken his femur several times: no sooner had the bone set than he would be sent back on to the ice rink. He eventually contracted coxitis, which meant that he would never be able to move again unless he

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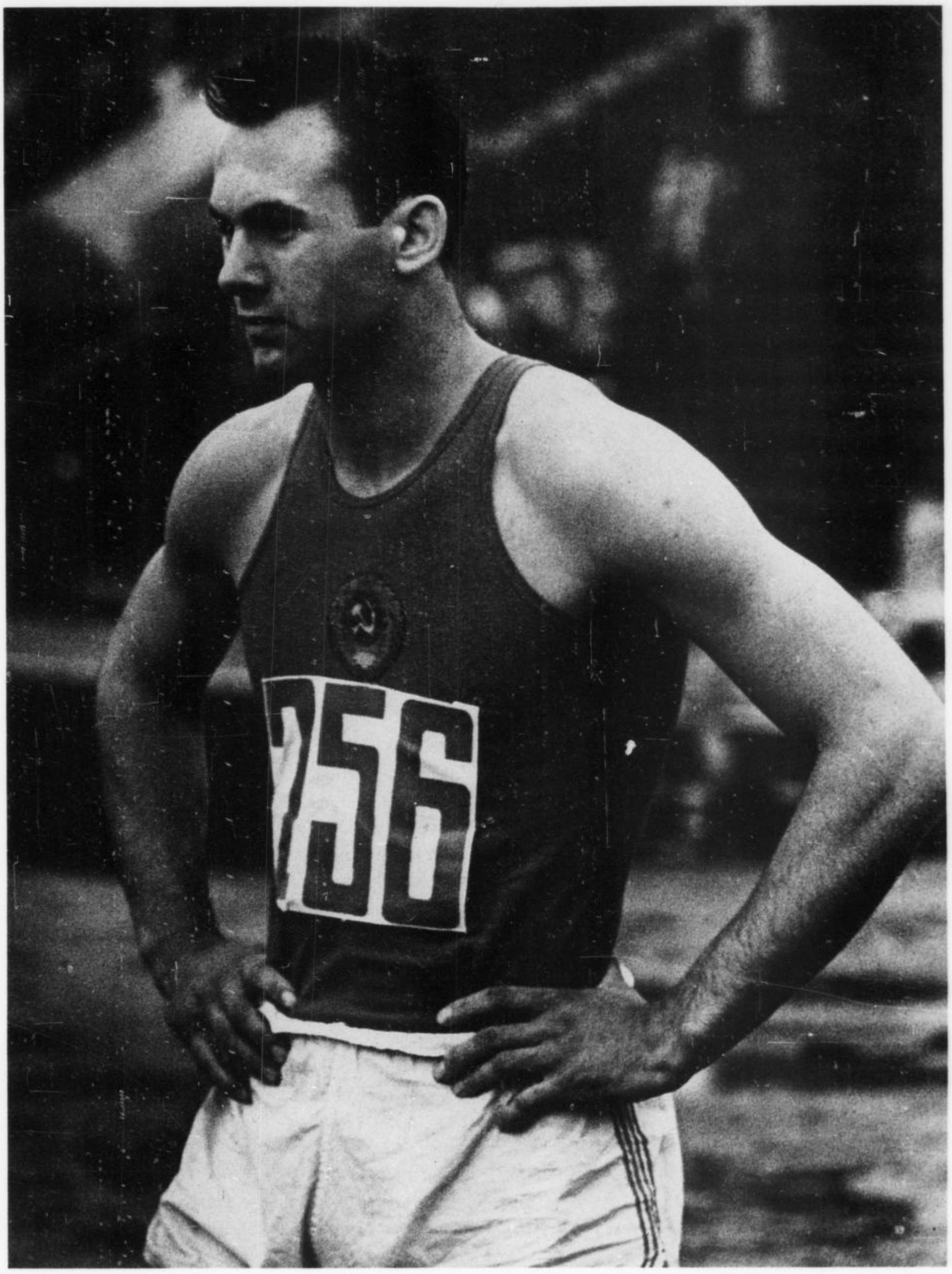


Valery Brumel, Olympic high jump champion in 1964 and world record holder until 1973.

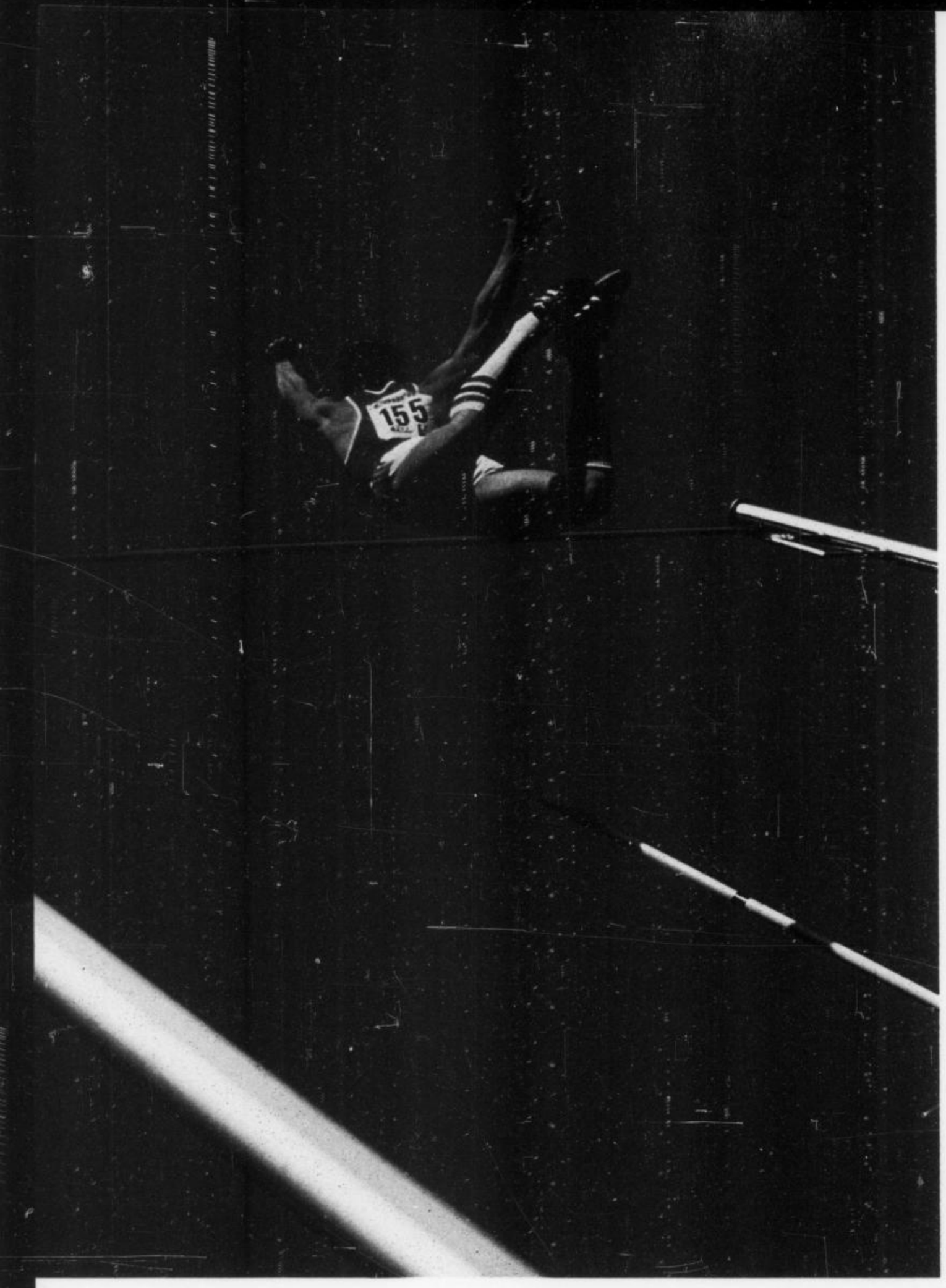
had a special hip operation of the kind hardly ever performed in the Soviet Union.

Had Soviet society not slowly but surely become more democratic, the famous Swedish ice-hockey-player-turned businessman, Tumba-Juhensson, would probably never have opened a golf club in Moscow. During one of his frequent trips to the capital he learned of the misfortune that had struck down his former comrade and opponent, and decided to try to raise money for Yakushev to have an operation in Sweden. The appeal he launched got plenty of publicity in the media and brought in 150,000 kronor. When the surgeons subsequently waived their fees, the money was used to set up the Tumba Foundation, whose aim is to aid disabled sportsmen. Yakushev was able to walk again.

CHAMPIONS FOR SALE

The wind of change which swept successively through the Soviet Union, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Russia eventually had repercussions in the world of sport. Various charities were set up to help veteran and disabled sportsmen, and a union of physical-education, sports and tourism workers saw the light of day.

All these organizations are driven by noble ideals and make even nobler statements of faith, but the country is in the throes of such economic chaos that it would be a mistake to expect them to come up with a solution to everyone's problems in the immediate future. Even so, I have to admit to a feeling of uneasiness when



Pole-vaulter Sergei Bubka sets a new world record with a jump of 6 metres in Paris in 1985.

perfectly fit young sportsmen brazenly beg for what can only be called charity. Pair figure-skating Olympic champion Aleksandr Zaitsev, husband and partner of Irina Rodnina, was appalled to see certain sportsmen, during a press conference at the 1992 Albertville Winter Olympic Games, giving their bank-account numbers to the assembled journalists and appealing, through them, to the generosity of the public.

Since the collapse of the Iron Curtain, dozens if not hundreds of young CIS athletes have been offering their talents to the highest bidders on the world market. With a few exceptions, the terms they get offered are modest, though better than what they could expect at home. Sergei Bubka, who has just settled in Germany, told me that his new athletics club in Berlin had offered him $120,000, as well as a very comfortable home, a car and a number of other perks, such as free return trips with his family to Donetsk, his home town, whenever he wants. But Bubka is Bubka, an unrivalled champion who deserves even better than that. Colleagues of his in various other disciplines accept less attractive offers, which nevertheless guarantee them and their families a decent living for several years.

As a result, football in the CIS has been bled dry. Hundreds of top players have joined professional clubs all over western Europe. And the national ice-hockey team has been forced to enter its B team, and sometimes even its C team, in international championships because its best players have been snapped up by clubs on the other side of the Atlantic.

The altar of top-level sport

Young sportsmen do rather well, but the outlook for their elders is less rosy. Few manage to hold their own like Yuri Sedykh. At thirty-seven, he can do only one thing: throw the hammer. But he can throw it a very long way—further than anyone else in the world. He is a "veteran" sportsman who will make a great contribution to athletics in France, where he has settled with his family, and will earn a better living than he could back home. But his is an exceptional case. Most of those who give up competition are doomed to a life of vegetation.

After having sacrificed their lives and their health on the altar of top-level sport, all they can do is sit back and hope that one of the new mutual funds set up to help them will do its job. But they should not expect too much. Brumel told me, doing his best not to sound sarcastic, that the former middleweight boxer Boris Lagutin, who was Olympic champion in 1960 and 1964, came round one day to give him an "exceptional allowance" of 500 roubles from the social welfare fund.

I am told that the Yashin Fund of the Dynamo Sports Club has set up a monthly pension of 500 roubles for its veterans, with the help of its football and ice-hockey teams. Some payments have already been made. Athletes also receive invaluable help from the Association XXI fund which, for example, enabled Nikolai Balboshin, a superb wrestler who had fallen ill and lost all hope of recovery, to get better. There are thousands of other examples of the way such welfare organizations have brought back to life—the expression is not too strong—former sporting stars who were in danger of dying prematurely, such as the basketball players Anatoly Polivda and Aleksandr Siznenko, who at 2.42 metres is currently the tallest man in the world.

Things are beginning to change, and sooner or later there will be results. It is all rather novel for us: we had got too used to leaving everything to the state, which has other problems on its plate at the moment.

Meanwhile, I have not yet had a chance to give Brumel his sausage. At the moment he is in Genoa (Italy), whose city council has given him an award for his sporting achievements, and where he is thinking of applying for Italian citizenship, since Russians are now entitled to dual nationality. I am keeping the Seattle sausage for him, as a reminder of Stephanie's thoughtfulness and the still recent period in his life when things looked pretty bleak. ❐

Fair play and the competitive spirit

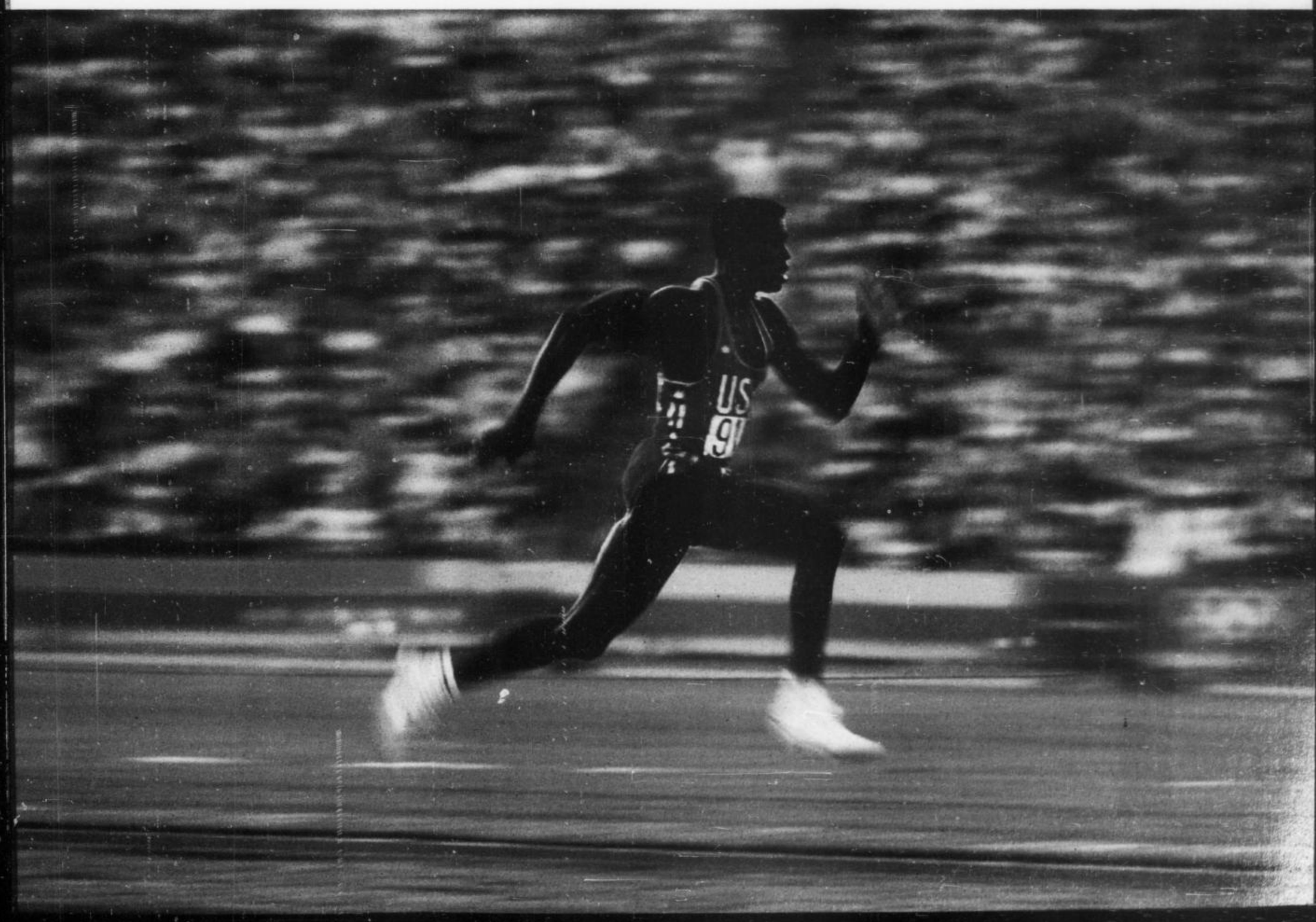
by Michel Caillat

"YES, sport is an order of chivalry, an honour, a code of ethics and aesthetics which recruits from all classes and all peoples, mixing them fraternally together throughout the entire world. . . . Yes, sport is education, the most concrete and the truest form of education, that of character. . . . Yes, sport is culture, because the ephemeral gestures it describes in time and space—for nothing except the sheer pleasure of it, as Plato says—bring into broad daylight, by dramatizing them, the most elementary values (which are nevertheless the most profound and all-embracing) of the peoples and of the very race itself; culture, finally, because it creates beauty, and creates it above all for those who have the least opportunity to feast thereon."

With these words, in an address delivered in 1963, UNESCO's then Director-General, René Maheu, evoked the great themes of sporting mythology, which associate with the word sport the values of loyalty, purity, beauty, morality, and fraternity, and ascribe to it a vocation that is both aesthetic and ethical.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

A recent arrival in the world of business, the notion of ethics appears to be inherent in sport, which could be said to be essentially ethical. It rests on a series of powerful myths: the myth that sport has always existed (that it is non-historical); the myth that sport and human nature originated in very early times (man as a sporting animal); and the myth that sport has somehow been led astray, perverted, hijacked. The distinction made between sport practised for its own sake and sport exclusively geared to success makes for all kinds of hair-splitting



Carl Lewis of the United States heads for a gold medal in the long jump at the Los Angeles Olympics in 1984.

about the extent to which an ideal—which was wishful thinking in any case—has been corrupted.

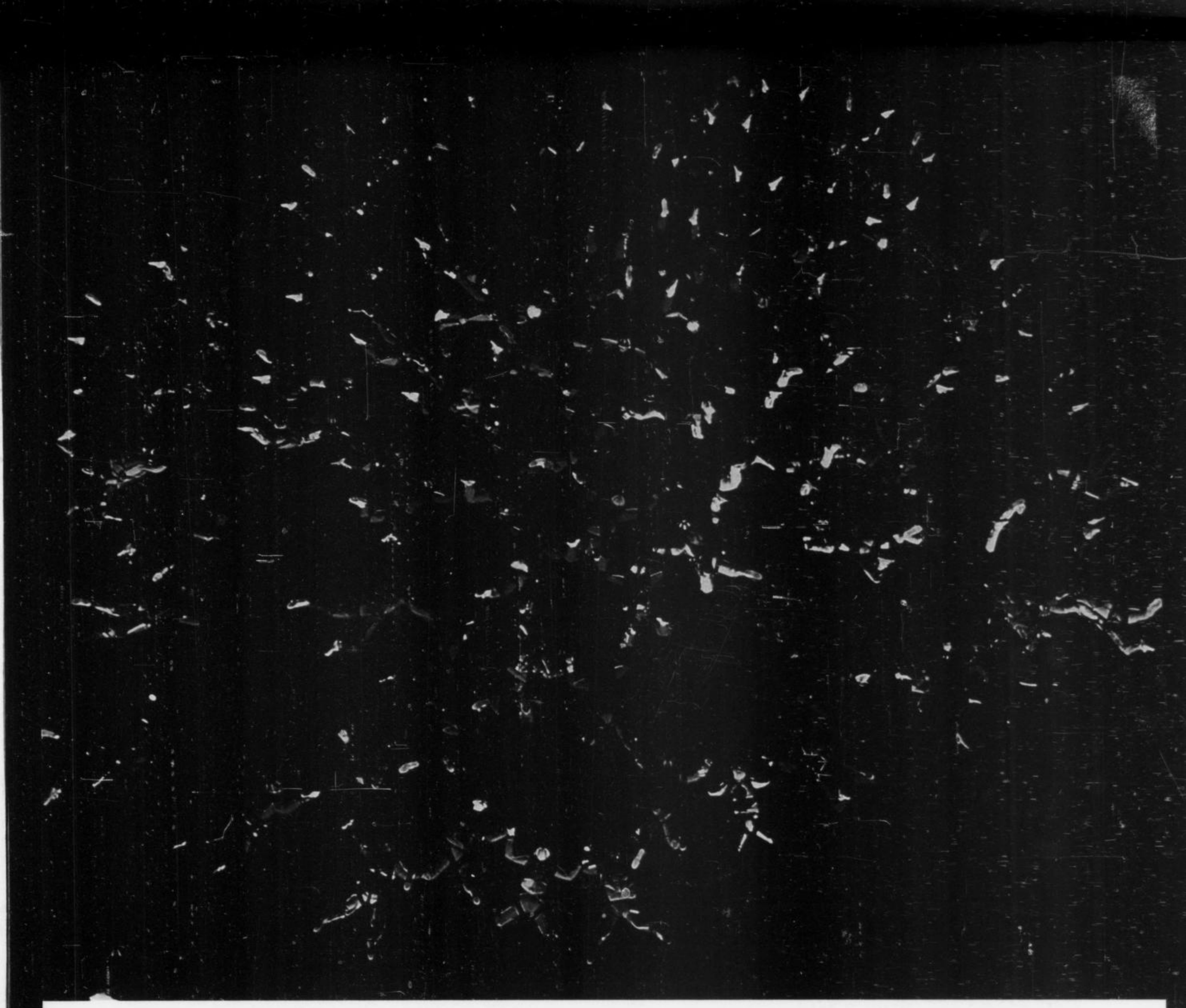
What do we mean by sport? A commonsense definition might include all forms of activity requiring some degree of physical effort, ranging from cycling with friends to the World Cup final. But this definition is too broad to be useful. A stricter definition would have us see sport as an institutionalized competitive physical activity that is structurally and historically linked to industrial society. As a physical pursuit that is most prevalent in societies where competition is widespread, sport is simultaneously a contest governed by rules and a system in which human bodies are ranked according to their performance. Competitive sports involving physical activity whose prime feature is a systematic striving for achievement are thus a relatively recent social phenomenon. Sport as we know it today has not always existed. We therefore have to ask ourselves what values present-day sport really embodies and whether there is not an unbridgeable gap between the values it purports to represent and those which it actually brings into play.

Morality and religion

Kant said that the postulate of morality is the existence of God. Pierre de Coubertin, the man who revived the Olympic Games, also took the idea of religion as a basis for moral precepts. In *A la jeunesse sportive de toutes les nations* (1927), he states: "By renovating an institution twenty-five centuries old, we wanted you again to become devotees of the religion of sport as envisioned by our great forebears. In the modern world, so full of challenging prospects yet so beset by the perils of decline, the Olympic movement can become a school as much of high and pure moral principles as of endurance and physical energy." Coubertin was convinced that sport, like religion, was "closely bound to morality". Like religion, sport offers reassurance and consolation. Widespread practice of sport would be the foundation of far-reaching social and ethical reform capable of shaping a new civilization. Sport was to rid society of ills such as alcoholism, moral depravity, wrong-doing, idleness, and wanton eroticism, and bring about harmony within nations, by settling the question of the class struggle once and for all.

What Coubertin called his philosophico-religious doctrine has inspired the vast majority of thinkers, journalists and writers past and present who believe implicitly in the therapeutic virtues of sport and its purported ability to "perfect the soul by perfecting the body". In 1942, in the middle of the war, Maurice Baquet, the theoretician of the French Communist Party, wrote that competitive physical activity brings us closer to "the creation of the ancient

A free-fall monoski parachutist in action.



In 1990, 80 European parachutists over Niort (France) set a new women's world record for the largest free-fall parachute formation.

MICHEL CAILLAT, of France, has published several books on sport including *L'idéologie du sport en France* (1989; "The Ideology of Sport in France") and *Sport en miettes* (1981; "Sport in Smithereens"). He is also the co-author of studies on the Olympic movement and on the world of football.

ideal of man as beautiful, good and brave both on and off the sportsfield". Some twelve years later, at the other end of the French political spectrum, the Gaullist *Essai de doctrine du sport* noted that "the moral essence of sporting activity is not unselfishness but loyalty. . . . Fair play is the basic tenet of sport. . . . Fairness guarantees the authenticity of the values established on the field. It brings a human quality to the world of sport. . . . As a factor of individual self-fulfilment and as an indispensable element of social organization, sport contributes to human advancement".

When people talk about sport, they always seem to be talking about what ought to be rather than what is. Sport has always been in jeopardy. The hour of its birth was the hour when the first symptoms of its sickness appeared and the first anguished calls for a cure were made. As long ago as 1902, Pierre de Coubertin denounced the immorality of rowdyism and pleaded that sport should be allowed to flourish in an atmosphere of disinterestedness and chivalry. Institutionalized sport is being undermined by money, violence, cheating, politicization, nationalism and doping. But those who worship sport regularly demand that "this scandalous state of affairs should be brought to an end and the moral code of sport should be defended". Perhaps this is a good moment to ask point-blank whether there *is* a morality of sport.

Infringements of human rights

From an ethical standpoint, it is impossible to justify an action solely on the grounds of its effectiveness. This being so, does it make sense to talk of ethics in competitive sport? Athletes, whatever their level, are trained for the single-minded pursuit of victory—victory over an opposing team, victory over themselves or the weather, or victory for their country. This gives rise to sport's great illusion—the omnipotence of the athlete's body. Yet competitive sport above all entails dispossession of the body, which is dragged into the maw of the system too soon (the problem of intensive training at an early age tends to be overlooked), roboticized by attempts to achieve maximum

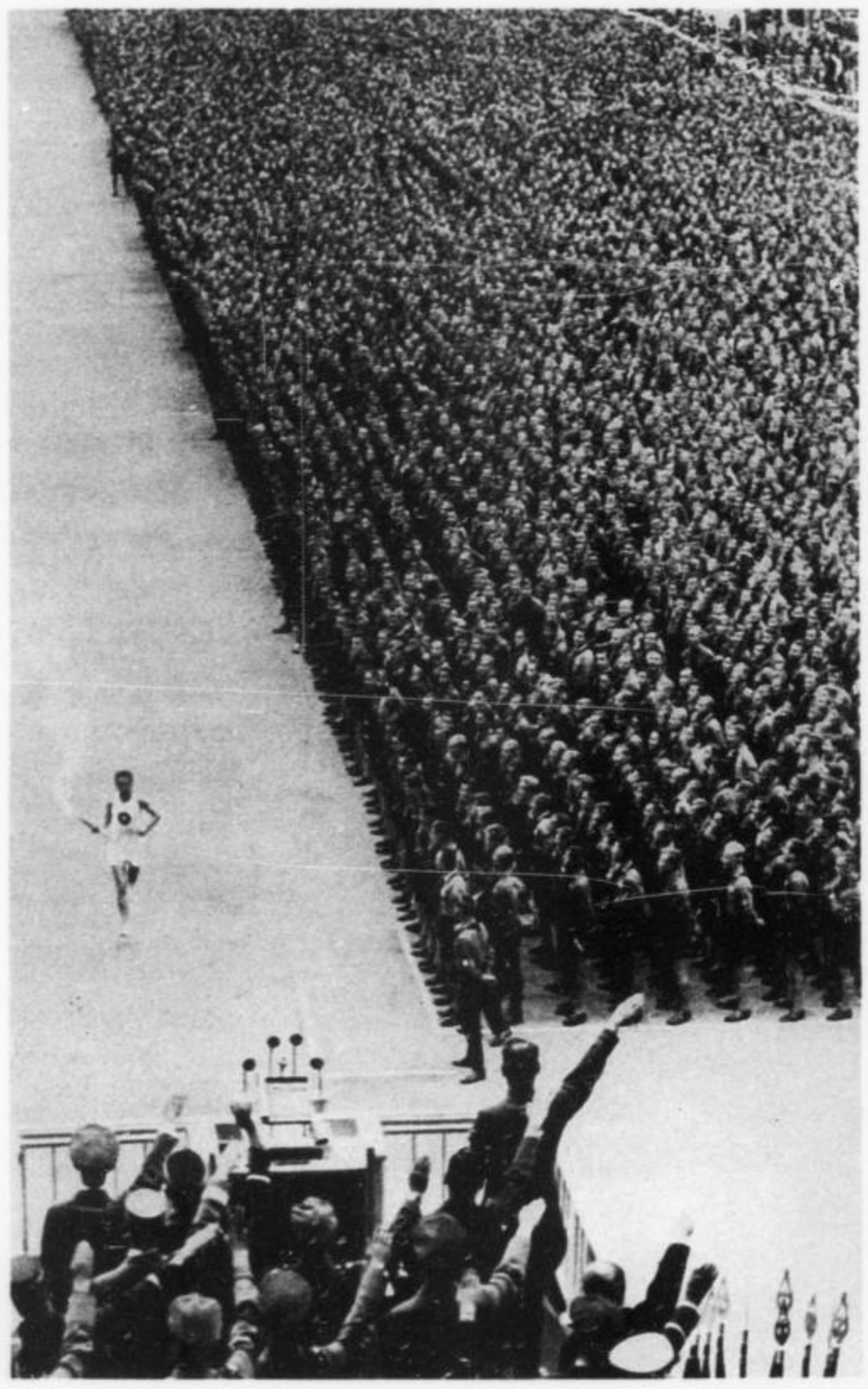
efficiency, bruised and scarred by self-inflicted suffering, risk-taking and injury, dominated, regimented, alienated, and turned into a commodity. In this mad race for achievement, instrumentalized athletes will do anything to see the colours of their country, region or village hoisted atop the flagpole.

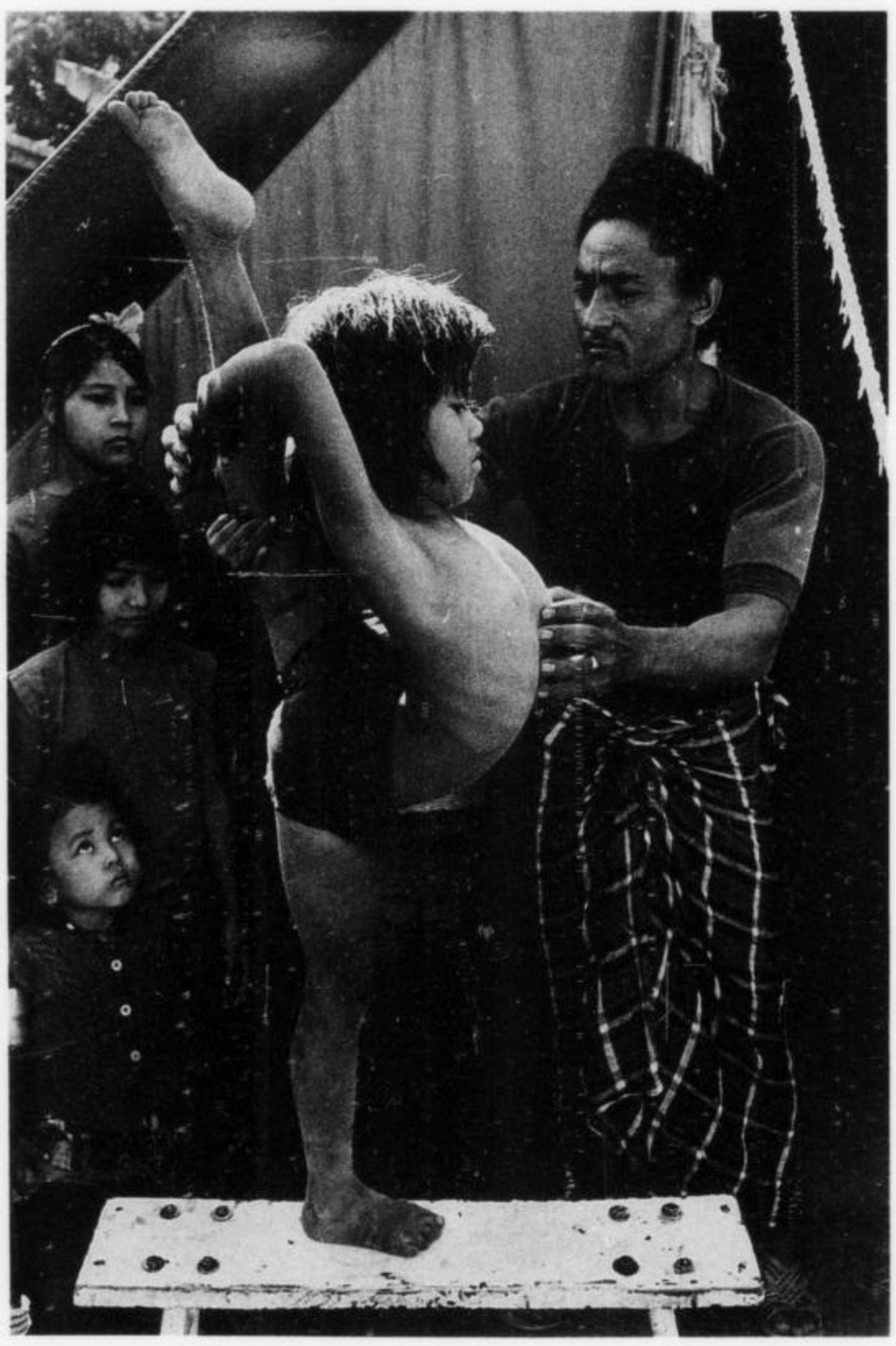
The moral code governing competitive sport is one of effort, sacrifice and violence, symbolic or otherwise. In the sporting system, athletes are sorted and classified, singled out, eliminated and selected. Athletes, whether they are champions or run-of-the-mill performers, have a kind of love-hate relationship with their bodies. They have to go to the limits of their capacities in order to experience intense joy in the midst of agonizing pain. This is "asceticism in joy" but also a form of moral indoctrination, since it imposes values like elitism, abstinence, submission, obedience and deprivation that are the cement binding our society together.

To talk of an ethic of competitive sport is to express a belief in the innate purity of sport, in an ideal perverted by society and the use that is made of it. It is also to refuse to see that sport has all too often been an accomplice of human rights abuses. In 1936, the sporting movement, supported by political circles and the press, had no scruples about holding the eleventh Olympic Games in Berlin. In 1956, the Melbourne Games were inaugurated at the very moment when Soviet tanks were "pacifying" their fraternal state of Hungary. Twelve years later, in Mexico City, the Olympic flame was lit only a few days after Warsaw Pact troops had invaded Czechoslovakia and only a few hours after a demonstration by Mexican students and workers on the "Square of Three Cultures" had been ruthlessly put down, with forty deaths. In 1978, the World Soccer Cup held in Argentina, where people were then disappearing or being murdered in their thousands, took place only a few metres away from a place where people had been tortured. Is it acceptable for a major sporting competition to be held in a country where there are massive and systematic human rights violations? This issue was raised again in 1980 by those who wished to boycott the Moscow Olympics. Once again, the sporting community of players, journalists and administrators fell back behind an inflexible and unacceptable line of defence: sport and politics do not mix.

From the Berlin Olympics to the Moscow Olympics, a long list of events paint a sorry picture of the Olympic ideal and sporting ethics. Sport is the darling of governments, as long as it causes no trouble. It is a world of phantasms, a quest for the absolute, not for truth. Writing of the moral value of the scientific outlook, Stendhal proclaimed his enthusiasm for mathematics, in which "hypocrisy is impossible". By subscribing to what Marcel Mauss called "an obligatory belief of society", athletes and spectators agree to pull the wool over their own eyes and participate in a form of hypocrisy. ❐

Below, opening ceremony of the eleventh Olympic Games, Berlin 1936.
Below right, master and pupil. The question of how much training young athletes should do is a controversial one.





Save Our Sports

by Roland Renson

Women of the Canela people (Brazil) take part in a log race.

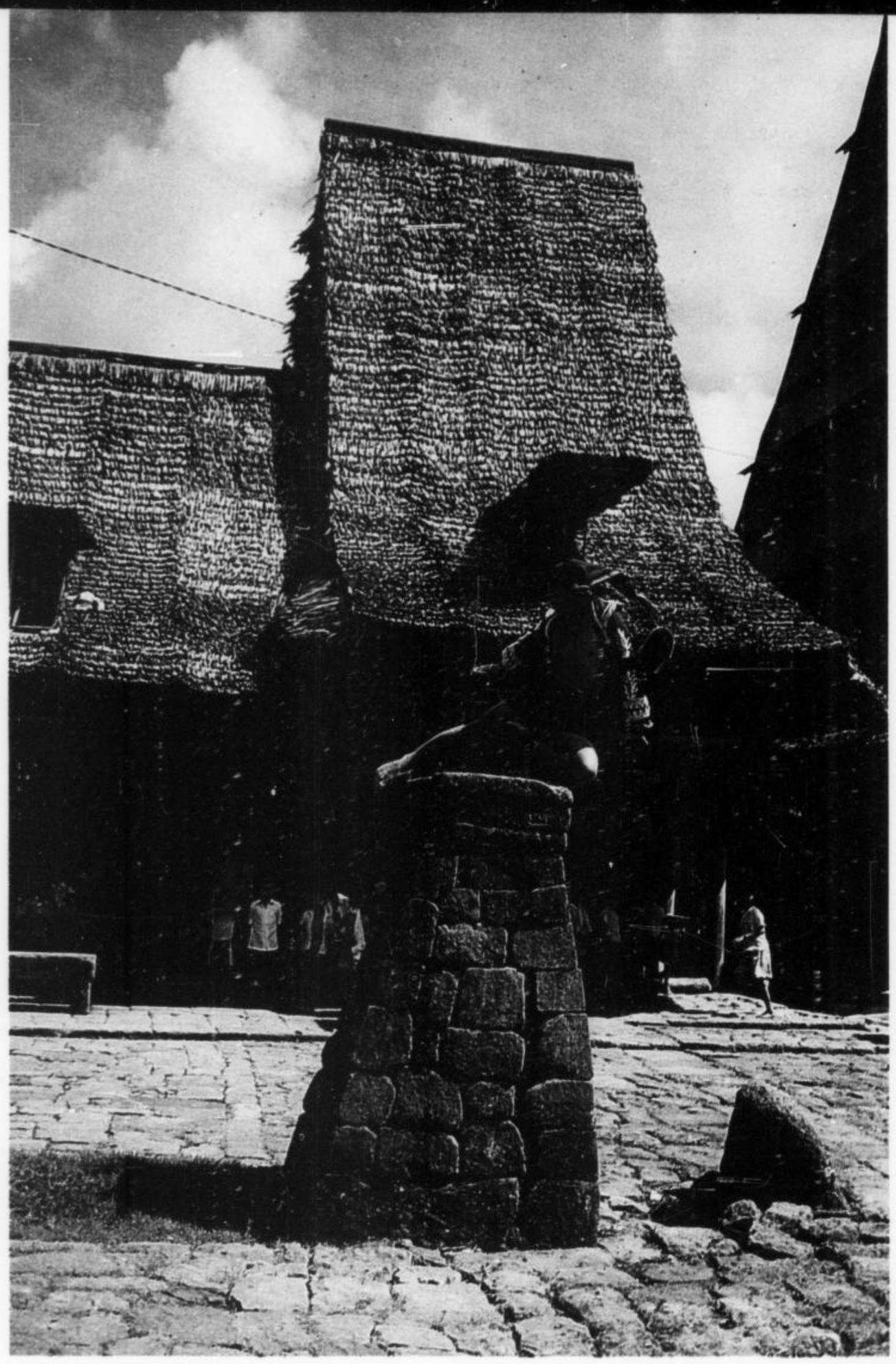
COMPARED to what we usually describe as "modern sports", that is to say the highly standardized Olympic disciplines that are practised in many parts of the world, traditional sports and games tend to be confined to a limited geographical area and are often referred to as "national" or "local". They are regarded as symbols of ethnic or regional identity and are called "folk games" by analogy with "folk music" or "folk dance". Such a "folk-lorization" of traditional sports can have both positive and negative consequences.

The positive effect is that the conscious "traditionalization" of certain sporting activities provides them with a kind of cultural charter for their protection. Such a charter should, however, not be aimed at preserving them in a reservation or in a folklore museum, where they can be peered at by spectators or tourists. They should be conserved actively by being incorporated into our culture of play and movement.

It was a curious quirk of history that the typical sports of Victorian Britain should have been given international prominence as symbols of progress by the French Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937). These "modern sports" became part of a new dynamic life-style of the social elite, the so-called "leisure class". In contrast to the international breakthrough of the modern sports movement around the turn of the century, local traditional sports and games gradually came to be regarded as the anachronistic remnants of a static and rustic pre-industrial society. The same process is occurring today, but it has now been "exported" to Third World countries.

In much the same way as these countries tend to regard the growing ecological awareness in the Western world as a luxury they cannot afford, they have also set themselves other technological and economic priorities than the protection of their traditional sports and games. Moreover, it is tempting for them to invest in success in the international sporting arena in order to gain worldwide recognition and status. This combined process of modernization and sportification, with its imitation of the Western cultural model, has even been described as a symptom of colonization.

In this article we define traditional sports as



Athletes of the Indonesian island of Nias are renowned for their prowess as high jumpers.

"sports which already existed or had their roots in physical activities before the spread of modern internationally organized sport". A limited sample of traditional sports has been chosen to illustrate this heritage.

Ball games

There is a rich variety of traditional ball games. They can either be played by hand or foot or with a batting device. Traditional European team-handball games include *pärkspel* on the Swedish island of Gotland, *kaatsen* in the Dutch province of Frisia, *balle pelote* in Belgium and France, *pallone elastico* in Italy and *pelota* in Spanish Valencia or in the Basque country. Most of the ancient and violent football forms have disappeared and have been replaced by modern soccer, except for the traditional *calcio fiorentino* in Florence (Italy).

In many southeast Asian countries, *sepak*, a kind of "foot-volley-ball", is played with a light rattan ball. In Meso- and South America, various traditional rubber-ball games were played using head, hand or elbow, hip or foot. Most of them have vanished today but they are sometimes re-enacted as tourist attractions.

Some ball games, such as Gaelic football in Ireland and Australian or New Zealand rules football, are played with both hands and feet. All kinds of batting devices are used, from racquets, as in real tennis and in France's *longue paume* game, to the sticks which are used to play *crosse*, a variant of golf played in northern France and Belgium. A traditional stick-ball game played by the North American Indians was also called *crosse* by the early French explorers and is now known as *lacrosse*. Other ball games make use of a tambourine (France and Italy), a forearm cover or "bracchiale", as in the Italian *pallone*, or a "chistera" in the spectacular *jai alai* of the Basques.

Bowl and pin games

Bowl games are played with a solid spherical object that is either rolled or thrown at a target. In pin games, targets are knocked down. Italian *bocce* and the French *jeu de boules* are now played far from their original home countries. A special case is the game of *closh*, which at the time of Erasmus (1469-1536) and Brueghel the Elder (1525-1569) was popular all over Europe. In this game a shovel-shaped bat is used to roll a heavy round bowl through an iron ring fixed in the ground. Apart from the well-known flat green bowls, which spread from England to the former British colonies, a wide variety of bowling games are found in Britain and in the central and southern European countries.

The modern American game of tenpin bowling has several historical variants, some of which are highly standardized and mechanized, such as *kegeln* in Germany and bordering countries. Other pin games range from Karelian pins, in which a stick is thrown instead of a bowl, to *pendelkegeln* (Germany), in which the bowl swung at the pins hangs on a wire.

Throwing games

Throwing a stick or a stone as far as possible or to hit a target is a basic human movement pattern. It appears in the modern athletic events of javelin, discus and hammer throwing, and in shot putting. In Sweden's traditional *varpa* game the projectiles are heavy discs. Smaller discs or coins, or sometimes stones, are used in both children's and adult throwing games all over the world. Javelin throwing is still practised by several peoples, not only as a form of training for combat or hunting, but also for recreational and competitive purposes. Such games are reported in many parts of South America. North American Indians have revived the game of "snow snake", in which a short spear is hurled as far as possible along a track in the snow. Hammer throwing and tossing the caber are typical events of the well-known Scottish Highland Games. A log-throwing event virtually identical to caber-tossing is found in Portugal, where it is known as *jogo do panco*, and in Sweden, where it goes by the name of *stäng-*

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Terra-cotta figurine probably depicting a pelota player. Dating from around 900-1350, it was discovered at Colima (Mexico).

störtning. Stone putting is practised in the traditional festivals of Swiss farmers in the Alps.

The game known as road bowls in Ireland, *klootschieten* in the Netherlands and *bosseln* or *klootschiessen* in East Frisia (Germany), is an interesting example both of the expression of regional ethnic identity and of the growing international awareness of traditional games. In 1969, these three independent groups of bowling enthusiasts joined together to form the International Bowl Playing Association.

Shooting games

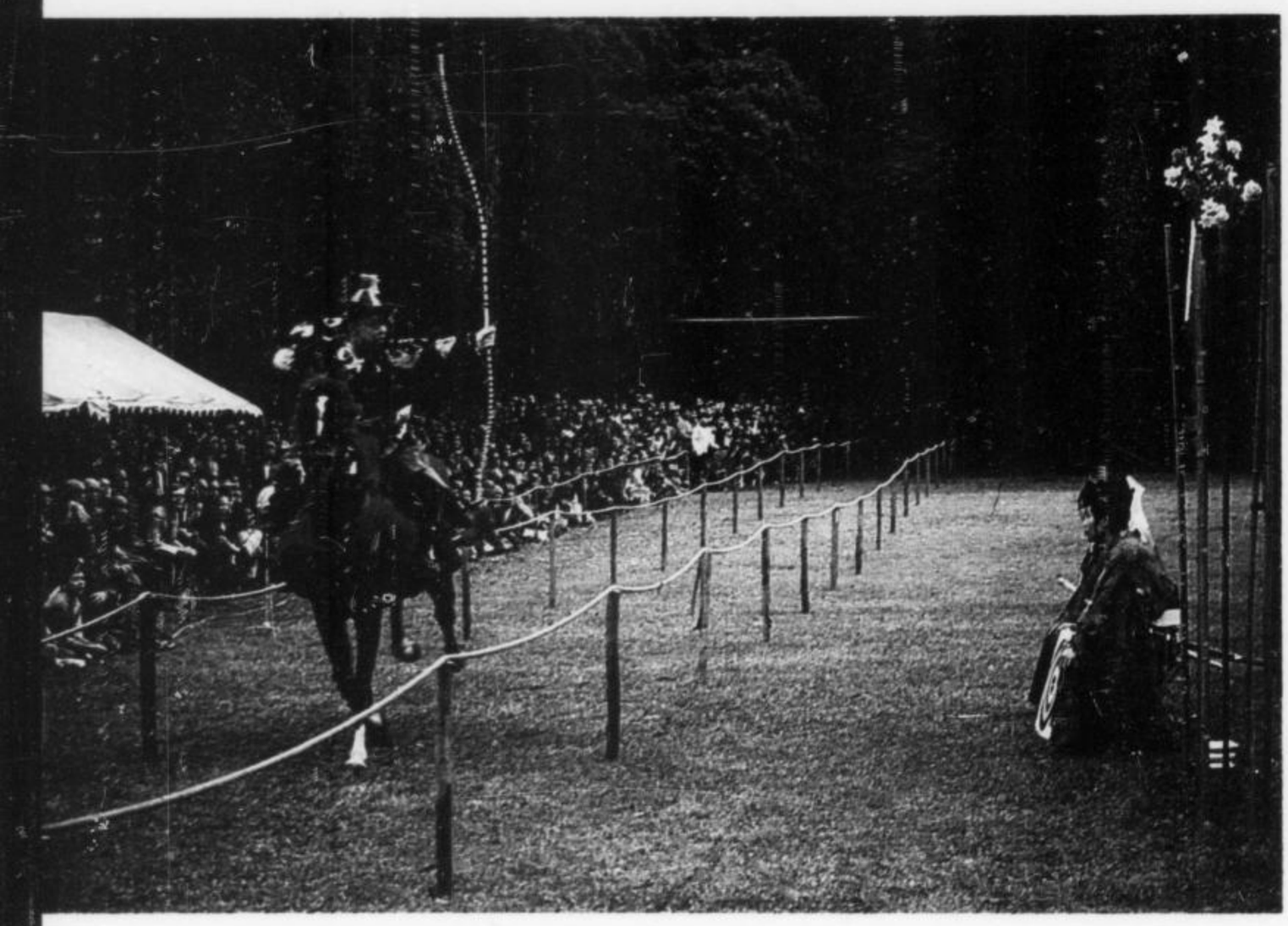
Shooting games have flourished in all cultures and have evolved into modern high-tech sports. Popinjay shooting, in which the target is a "jay" or set of "jays" attached to a tall mast, is depicted in many medieval and Renaissance paintings and prints and is still a very popular traditional sport in Flanders (Belgium). It even featured in the 1920 Antwerp Olympic Games. The target shooting practised by Japanese samurai and Zen priests is another example of the art of archery. Some present-day crossbow guilds in Flanders originated in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and can thus be considered as the first sports clubs in Europe. The impressive crossbow shooting festivals of the Italian *balestrieri*, such as are held in the magnificent city of Gubbio in the Umbrian hills and elsewhere, also have a long historical pedigree. Witnessing the pageantry of such competitions of crossbowmen competing to win a flag ("palio") is like stepping back into the living past.

When firearms were introduced, many archery and crossbow societies replaced their traditional weapons with culverins or carbines. These associations of riflemen, especially in Germany and Austria, but also in Denmark, are highly organized and have preserved to a notable extent their character as patriarchal men's clubs, especially in rural areas.

Fighting games

Wrestling is probably the oldest and the most universal traditional sport of humankind. So-called Graeco-Roman wrestling, which has

In the Sudan, Nuba wrestlers prepare for a match.



***Yabusame*, a form of archery on horseback practised in Japan since the 11th century, is also a form of meditation in Zen Buddhism. Three targets are set up beside a 218-metre-long track for the archer, traditionally a samurai, to shoot at as he gallops along.**

acquired official Olympic status, has no connection with the wrestling styles of Greek and Roman Antiquity, and the type of wrestling practised during the ancient Olympic Games has much more in common with present-day *pelivan* (Turkish wrestling) or even with modern judo. In Japan, *sumo* wrestling is considered as the most typical national sport.

Wrestling is Africa's most widespread traditional sport. The fierce wrestling of the Nuba people in Sudan is particularly famous. Traditional African wrestling is, however, rapidly changing or disappearing and being replaced by sports such as boxing and karate. Attempts are currently being made to establish an international federation of traditional wrestling styles. In Europe, international competitions have already been staged, in which *glima* wrestlers from Iceland were matched with adepts of the *lucha canaria* wrestling style practised in the Canary Islands. Moreover, an International Federation of Celtic Wrestling was founded in 1985, bringing together Icelandic *glima*, Scottish *backhold* and Breton *gouren*.

Tilting, the favourite sport of the knights of medieval Europe, was officially abolished in France in 1559 when King Henri II was mortally wounded in a confrontation with his captain of the guard. However, some of its variants have survived. They include ring tilting and *quintain*, which can be practised either on land or water, as in the case of *joutes girondines* in France and the *Fischerstechen* in Germany.

The martial arts are practised all over the world. Many of these sports have been highly ritualized and stylized in an endeavour to make them less lethal. Special protective gear is worn by practitioners of such dangerous sports as Kendo (Japan), and fencing, the latter of which has had Olympic status since the first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896.

ROLAND RENSON,
of Belgium, is head of the research unit in Sociocultural Kinanthropology at the Institute of Physical Education at Leuven. In 1990 he was elected President of the International Society for the History of Sport and Physical Education. He is the author of a number of books on traditional sports and games, including, with V. van Mele, *Traditional Games in South America* (1992), which has been published under the auspices of the International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education with financial support from UNESCO.

ANIMAL GAMES

Several animal games have gained a reputation as "blood sports" in the course of history and have been officially abandoned in many countries. Such cruel sports as bull-baiting and bear-baiting were popular in medieval and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, but these baitings, in which specially trained bulldogs were used, have not survived the so-called civilizing process. Cockfighting, however, is still very popular in southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia and the Philippines, and in the north of France. In some countries where cockfights are illegal, these games still have their clandestine but loyal supporters. Animals are also matched in fair competitions, as in pigeon racing and dog racing.

In most of these animal competitions, people train and coach the animals. In other cases, people engage in a direct and hazardous confrontation with animals, as in North American rodeos, bull-running in France and Spain, and bull-fighting in France, Mexico, Portugal and Spain.

LOCOMOTION GAMES

Some traditional races with a cultic significance still exist. The Tarahumara Indians of Mexico take part in a kickball race during which runners may cover over 300 kilometres in forty-eight hours as they run barefoot over rocky mountain trails, kicking a small hardwood ball in front of them. Another fantastic running feat is the log race of the Timbira and Kraho Indians of Brazil. In these annual relay races, each of two rival teams has to carry a heavy log over a considerable distance. All the participants have to run the entire route but relays take place every 100-150 metres. The race is widely seen as an act of worship, and so the concept of "achievement" seems more appropriate to describe it than that of "competition".

The Watusi of Rwanda in Africa and the inhabitants of the Indonesian island of Nias are famed for their prowess as high jumpers. In each place the jumpers use an inclined stone to take off, but whereas Watusi athletes try to clear a horizontal wooden bar, their Nias counterparts jump over a solid stone wall.

Among nomadic peoples who depend almost entirely for their subsistence on their reindeer, horses or camels, traditional sports tend to highlight riding skills. Striking examples include the reindeer-sledge races of the Sami people of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, Afghanistan's *buzkashi* game in which two teams of horsemen vie with each other to capture the carcass of a calf, or the annual King's camel race in Saudi Arabia, in which almost 3,000 contestants take part. The famous Palio of Siena, a traditional annual horse-race in the very heart of this old Italian town, attracts so many visitors that it is now held twice a year.

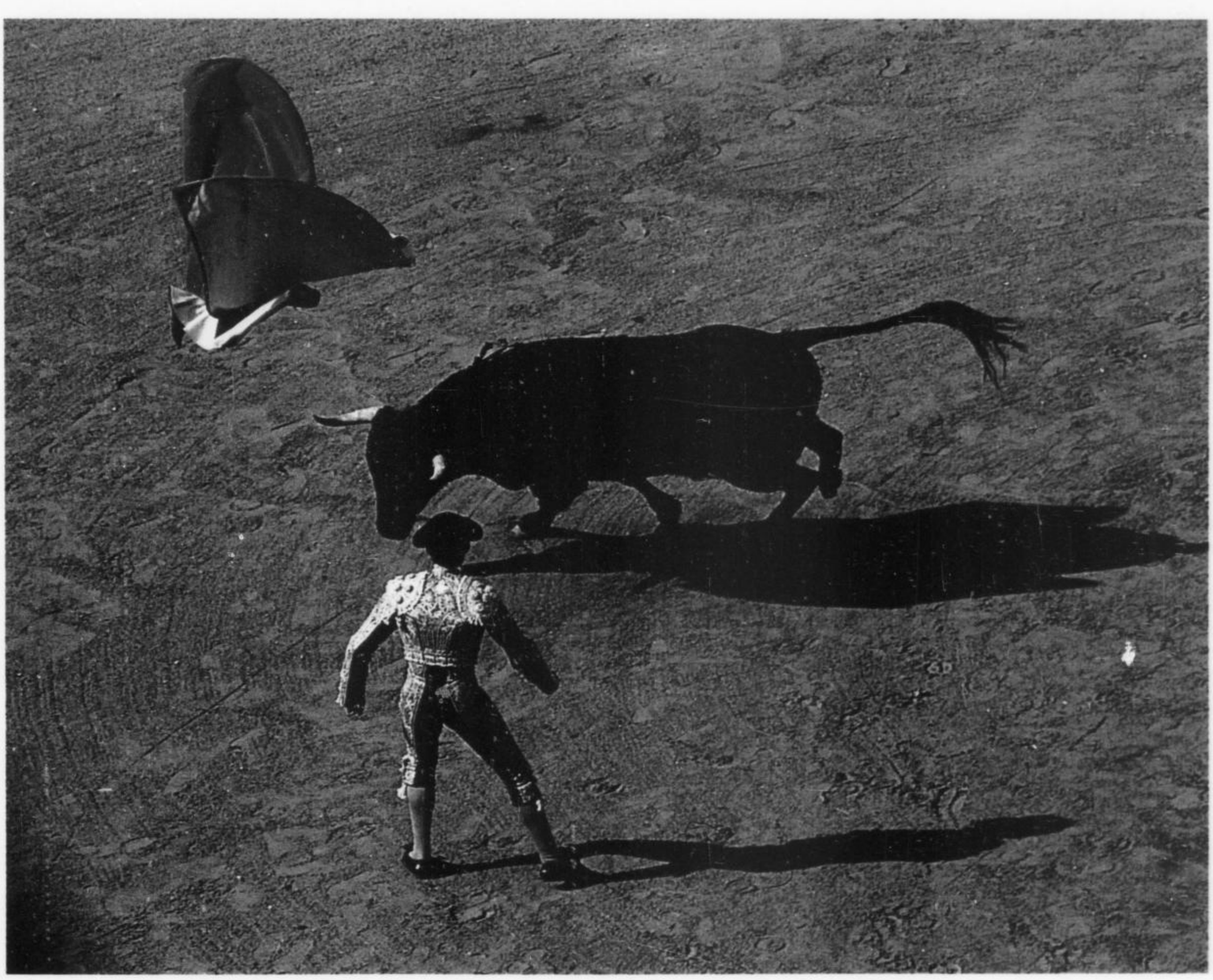
Acrobatics

Because of the limitations of the human neuro-muscular system, which has hardly changed since the emergence of *homo sapiens*, acrobatic performances are strikingly similar regardless of historical periods or cultures. The acrobatics that we see in the modern circus are, for example, very similar to those performed in the arenas of ancient Rome. Nor are the vaults and somersaults of modern gymnastics very different from the tumbling exercises described in 1599 by the Italian professional acrobat Tuccaro (1536-1604). The *"Cong-Fou"* gymnastic exercises of the Chinese Taoist monks described by the French Jesuit Amiot (1718-1793) had so much in common with the Swedish gymnastics system of Per Henrik Ling (1776-1839) that the French physician Nicolas Dally (1859) was tempted to believe that Ling had simply copied them.

In all cultures, people try to keep in good physical shape by performing coded sets of physical exercises which are clearly linked to the ideological superstructure. These cover a wide range, from Zen meditation, Tai Chi, and yoga in the Eastern cultural hemisphere, to aerobics, aquabics and callanatics in the Western world. A striking example of such traditional acrobatics are the *castellers* or human pyramids formed by amateur gymnasts in Barcelona (Spain) as towering symbols of their Catalan identity.

Traditional sports and games are too often treated as the "Cinderellas" of modern sports. It should not be forgotten, however, that these traditional sports and games are at the origin of almost all modern sports and that they may offer a welcome alternative to a worldwide process of uniform "sportification", which tends to reduce the great variety of past and present forms of play to the narrow category represented by modern competitive sports.

With the radical sociocultural and economic changes that are turning the world into a single "global village", there is a risk that many traditional sports may be lost for ever. Traditional sports are important aspects of our cultural heritage and deserve to be studied more carefully. Analysis of this heritage could help us to rethink and modify certain negative aspects of modern sports. Traditional sports should no longer play the role of barefoot Cinderella. The time has come for them to step into the boots of Tom Thumb and to stand up and speak out. ❐



A bullfight at Pamplona (Spain).

NEWSBRIEFS

PIERRE DE COUBERTIN INTERNATIONAL FAIR PLAY AWARDS FOR 1991

Each year since 1964, the UNESCO-supported International Fair Play Committeee has awarded trophies to sportsmen and women, personalities from the world of sport and sports institutions which have distinguished themselves through their exemplary behaviour. Over a hundred prizewinners have been honoured so far.

On 15 October 1992, the Director-General of UNESCO presented the trophies for 1991 to the following laureates:

☛ **Robert Veghelyi (Hungary), fencing**

During the men's épée competition of the World Cadet Championships in Foggia (Italy), Robert Veghelyi was fencing against Seamus Robinson of Australia for a last hit that would give him a place in the final. Veghelyi attacked and his green light came on. The president of the jury awarded him the hit and the Hungarian team exploded with joy. Veghelyi then informed the jury that the hit had been on the floor, and that this had passed unnoticed. The point was annulled, replayed, and won by Robinson, who eventually won the final. His title of world champion owed much to Robert Veghelyi's spirit of fair play.

☛ **Racing Club de France, rugby**

In the semi-final of the French championship, the RCF team was playing against Toulouse. In the 24th minute, a Toulouse player tried to score a drop goal but the ball went just under the bar. The referee, dazzled by the Sun, allowed the goal. The RCF players saw that the goal was invalid but nevertheless accepted the referee's decision without protest. Toulouse won the match by one point, 13 to 12. After the match the RCF players explained that they were not in the habit of discussing a referee's decision and that anyway they could have won if only they had played better.

☛ **Arthur Ashe (United States), tennis**

This outstanding champion has been hailed by his peers for his attitude of fair play throughout his career as a professional tennis player. He was the first black athlete to win the Grand Slam tournaments: the U.S. Open in 1968, the Australian Open in 1970, Wimbledon in 1971. Since his retirement, he has continued to embody the chivalrous spirit he showed on the courts by using his prestige as a former champion in social and educational action to promote human dignity.

UNESCO, NGOS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR–A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

UNESCO's International Fund for the Development of Physical Education and Sport (FIDEPS) is looking for ways of encouraging the design and construction of sports facilities in developing countries, thereby helping to reduce the disparities that exist in this field between rich and poor nations.

With the support of ASC (Art, Sport, Culture)—the International Association for the Promotion of Physical and Cultural Activities—a non-governmental organization whose members include leading figures in sport, the arts, culture and economics, the Fund organized an architecture competition in 1988. Architects were asked to design inexpensive modular sports facilities that could be built with local materials and local skills.

In 1991 the BMW/France Foundation agreed to take this theme for its biennial Architecture and Industrial Design Competition. This was not the first joint enterprise of this kind, since in 1990 BMW helped to organize the Paris-Astrakhan motorcycle rally, part of UNESCO's Silk Roads project.

This successful partnership will continue in 1993 with the forthcoming Architecture and industrial Design Competition of the BMW/France Foundation, which will be concerned with the environment, the city and the car.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

This year UNESCO is again joining with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Volunteers to celebrate International Volunteer Day on 5 December. In 1991 the Day was marked by many successful events, including a week of antipollution activities in Ghana, tree planting projects in Mauritania, Indonesia and Ghana, the opening of a free medical clinic in Jamaica, a special day of hospital work in Berne (Switzerland), and public meetings and media campaigns all over the world.

The United Nations Volunteers Programme, under the auspices of UNDP, offers young professionals from all over the world the opportunity to take part in development activities. Since it was created in 1970, over 7,000 volunteers have served in the field, living in contact with the needy and offering their competence and experience in fields as different as hydrology, teaching, civil engineering and public health.

UNESCO is associated with this programme notably through the Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service, a non-governmental organization founded under UNESCO auspices in 1948. It has 130 member organizations which will be taking part, alongside many other local and national volunteer associations, in special activities planned for International Volunteer Day on 5 December. ❐

Commentary *by Federico Mayor*

This article is one of a series in which the Director-General of UNESCO sets out his thinking on matters of current concern

The sporting ideal

THIS Olympic year has, once again, given us all an opportunity to appreciate the importance of the sporting spirit and universal values whose flame burns as brightly as ever in the world's athletes. In Barcelona I was able to witness the universal appeal of the Games for myself. Over 10,000 athletes, 65,000 spectators in the Montjuic Stadium and close on three-and-a-half billion television viewers were united during the opening ceremony in an ardent desire to celebrate the sporting ideal.

Observing that vast and motley crowd, I was reminded of the words of Baron Pierre de Coubertin: "The ideal sports spectator is an athlete who has taken a break from his or her own exertions to watch the performance of a more skilful or better trained fellow athlete". Of course athletes watching as spectators are fully conversant with the rules of the sport and the controlled movement it involves; they are in a better position to judge the technical and tactical aspects of a competitor's performance. But in a world where the mass media make it possible for the peoples of the five inhabited continents to follow Olympic events as they take place, the spectator has become considerably more sophisticated. Nowadays, while often thrilled by the excitement of the spectacle, the amateur has learnt to appreciate the aesthetic quality of movement and excellence of performance.

We all also know, alas, that spectators and athletes sometimes behave in a way that can mar the educational function of sport. I shall not dwell on the reasons for these lapses—for which remedies exist and which have been analysed and condemned by all who strive tirelessly to defend the sporting ethic. I shall simply lay stress—for it seems to me to be crucial—on the need to encourage fair play from the earliest possible age, at school and through youth movements and associations, with the assistance of the media.

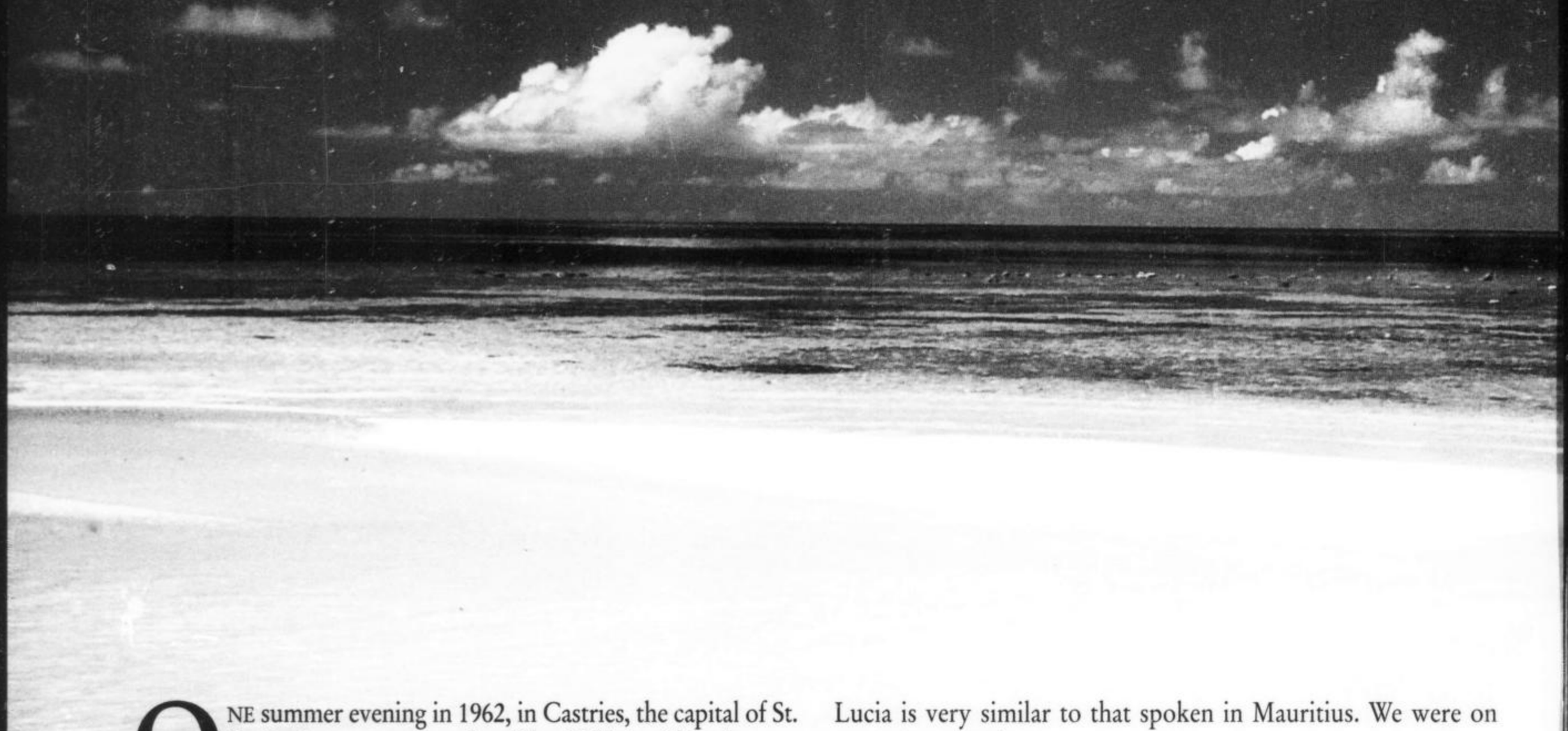
At its most recent session, UNESCO's General Conference added an article to the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport in which it called on public authorities, specialized non-governmental organizations, the Olympic Movement, the world of sport, educators, health professionals, parents, and particularly the media, to co-operate in averting the harmful influences that threaten sport.

Happily, the harmful trends are counterbalanced by the exhilarating images that remain etched in our memories. I am thinking of the behaviour of the winners of the trophies awarded annually by the International Fair Play Committee as a tribute to the moral and sporting qualities of athletes representing a multiplicity of nationalities and sports.

I am also thinking of two athletes who ran in the women's 10,000 metres at the last Olympic Games. These two African women, whom politics had put in opposing camps, found themselves united by sport; running shoulder to shoulder, they acknowledged each other's existence in their shared effort. The image of the lap of honour they ran together after the race, hand in hand, projected the glow of fellowship in sport to the four corners of the Earth. ❐

Islands in majesty: Nobel

BY ÉDOUARD J. MAUNICK



ONE summer evening in 1962, in Castries, the capital of St. Lucia, I went to see a play, *The Malfinis.* After the performance, I made a point of going up to the author, Roderick Walcott, and telling him how much I had enjoyed his work. Roderick thanked me for my compliments, but confided to me with a smile that his talent stood no comparison to that of his twin brother Derek.

My curiosity was aroused and I knew that I would not rest until I had met Derek Walcott, who was then living not in St. Lucia but in Trinidad. In the meantime I bought a copy of the only book of his that I could get hold of. Entitled *In a Green Night* (1962), it was a collection of poems of rare quality. To read it was to enter the presence of a shaper of words fit for a teller of islands: his own, as one of many other islands in the Caribbean, but more than this, as partaking of the universal—although none of its quiddities was denied, neglected or ignored. Here was a profound voice, in its utterances and in its silences. A voice which I was later to encounter in other collections of Derek Walcott's work: *The Castaway and Other Poems* (1965), *Sea Grapes* (1976), *The Fortunate Traveller* (1982), *The Arkansas Testament* (1987)—one of my particular favourites—but this is only a partial list.

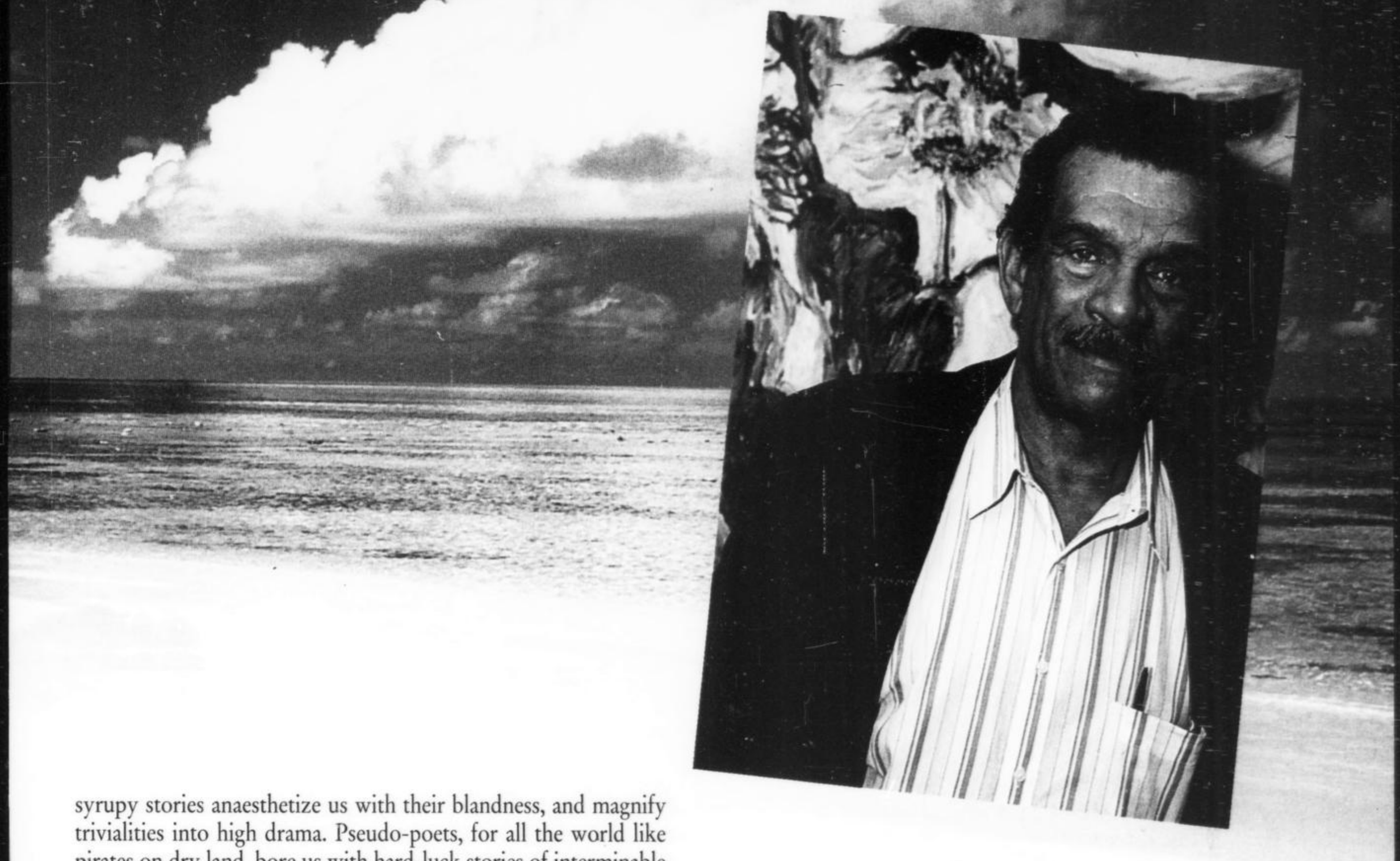
When I eventually did meet Derek Walcott—in Berlin in 1964 at a get-together of Black and Western writers and poets—it was as if we had always known each other. No ceremony, no pedantic talk: just a warm, simple handshake, a dinner with beer, and a long walk through the streets of Berlin during which we made no attempt to pick at the wounds of a past heavy with night and fog. All that mattered was our own inner Suns, which we want to shine out to the world from our poetry. We spoke English, a bit of French, and a lot of Creole. Strangely enough, the patois of St. Lucia is very similar to that spoken in Mauritius. We were on common ground.

Now that he has been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, I am happy for him and for poetry, but also for the islands. By honouring Derek Walcott, without in any way belittling the genius of this immense poet, the jury salutes him for sailing to his own compass, of braving winds and tides, and bringing his native St. Lucia—and with her the islands of all the seas in the world—safely to port.

It goes without saying that when a poet's work is hoisted to such pinnacles of international recognition, it is bound to attract widespread public interest. And a good thing too. But what a pity that we have to wait for an event of this kind before a poet's voice is heard and listened to. I don't know how widely or how well Derek Walcott has been translated, but I do know that in France, for example, no collection of his work was published until last October, when Editions Circé of Strasbourg brought out a translation by Claire Malroux of *The Star-Apple Kingdom* (1979).[1] And yet much had been done over the years—I am thinking of translations published in the magazine *Présence Africaine*—to draw attention to the existence and range of a major body of work, one which had, incidentally, won considerable recognition in England, a stone's throw away from Paris.

It is constantly being drummed into us that nobody reads poetry any more, a euphemism for the fact that not much poetry gets into print. Publishers and readers—although poets themselves are not wholly blameless—do not realize that to ostracize poetry is to condemn the most consummate form of prayer, whether it comes from the mouths of believers or pagans. I feel that this has to be said. Best-sellers have abolished miracles;

Prize-winner Derek Walcott



syrupy stories anaesthetize us with their blandness, and magnify trivialities into high drama. Pseudo-poets, for all the world like pirates on dry land, bore us with hard-luck stories of interminable length—that is when they aren't busy claiming to be the popes of phantom churches, speaking for congregations of which they are the only member. But enough of that! Let us render to the voice its full measure, and to words the magic of saying. Poetry is not a luxury, a sweet; it is a necessity, it is sustenance itself.

When Derek Walcott writes (I take a few lines at random from his collection *The Fortunate Traveller*):

The moon shines like a lost button;
the black water stinks under the sodium lights on
the wharf. The night is turned on as firmly
as a switch, dishes clatter behind bright windows,
I walk along the walls with occasional shadows
that say nothing. Sometimes, in narrow doors
there are old men playing the same quiet games—
cards, draughts, dominoes. I give them names.
The night is companionable, the day is as fierce as
our human future anywhere. I can understand
Borges's blind love of Buenos Aires,
how a man feels the veins of a city swell in his hand[2],

he is not only telling his own story, he is telling ours, too. He whispers to us the delicious temptation to look around so that we can see, feel, experience the moment as a piece of eternity. He summons us to our own assembly, wherever we may be from. And he often awakens in each of us the possibility of our own personal Odyssey. Again I quote:

At the end of this sentence, rain will begin.
At the rain's edge, a sail.

Slowly the sail will lose sight of islands;
into a mist will go the belief in harbors
of an entire race.

The ten-years war is finished.
Helen's hair, a gray cloud.
Troy, a white ashpit
by the drizzling sea.

The drizzle tightens like the strings of a harp.
A man with clouded eyes picks up the rain
and plucks the first line of the Odyssey. [3]

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1 *Le royaume du fruit-étoile.*

2 From "Port of Spain" in *The Fortunate Traveller,* Faber & Faber © 1982, by Derek Walcott

3 "Archipelagoes", in the collection cited above.

ÉDOUARD J. MAUNICK, Mauritian poet and writer, is the author of a number of books including *Ensoleillé vif* (Apollinaire Prize, 1976), *Anthologies personnelles* (1984) and *Paroles pour solder la mer* (1989).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Your March 1992 issue ("Women Speak Out on the Environment") provided excellent coverage of women's concerns for the future of the Earth. The editorial staff, and especially your consultant, Judithe Bizot, deserve our congratulations and appreciation for this coverage.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio, WorldWIDE Network (Women in Development and Environment) held a special workshop on "Women's Voices on Community Action for Environmental Management".

On behalf of the Board of WorldWIDE Network, we look forward to further coverage of women and environmental concerns.

HELEN FREEMAN
ACTING CHAIRPERSON
WORLDWIDE NETWORK
WASHINGTON, D.C.

SERMONS IN STONES

I was struck by the letter from reader Madame Lacoustille, of Monpezat, France, published in your July-August 1992 double issue. Unlike her, I find it inconceivable that anyone could make an assessment of people, in whom she declares she is interested, without taking into account the way in which they express themselves in art and architecture. The "save Angkor" appeal to which her letter refers is a perfect illustration of the importance of this aspect of the human condition. Stones bear witness to the mutual interaction of peoples.

CHRISTOPHE VEYS
BRUSSELS,
BELGIUM

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

I would like to congratulate the editorial staff of the *UNESCO Courier*, of which I am a lifelong reader, on the quality and diversity of the articles published, written by authors from all over the world, and also on the beauty of the illustrations (the June 1991 issue, "Maps and Map-makers", and the November 1990 issue, "Sacred Places", are two examples that spring to mind). I was particularly impressed by the February 1991 issue on "The Quest for Utopia", the January 1992 issue entitled "The Demographic Dimension" (to my mind the world's major problem) and the July-August 1992 issue, "Universality: a European Vision?" (I believe it is, but you certainly made us think again).

What I find remarkable, though this is what we are all striving for, is that these articles are being read in dozens of languages by people who are citizens of the world. Having reached an age at which one draws up a balance sheet, I am glad to belong to the generation which gave these movements their initial impetus, as it is currently doing for European unity, and thus contributed to the emergence of a wiser world.

YVES DORIAC
FORMER UNESCO CLUB LEADER
ANGLET,
FRANCE

INSECTICIDE AND HOMICIDE

In the spirit of the quest for universality, as propounded in the editorial of the July-August issue of the *UNESCO Courier*, should we not also be asking this question: "Is there any hope that humankind will evolve towards universality so long as humans continue to use and abuse herbicides, fungicides, pesticides, insecticides . . . and homicides?"

JEAN CHAUMET
SIMIANE-LA-ROTONDE,
FRANCE

THE SPLENDOURS OF SAGARMATHA

The excellent article by José Serra Vega on Sagarmatha National Park, published in the June 1992 issue of the *UNESCO Courier*, describes very well the splendour and rich ethnic background as well as the threats accumulating over that World Heritage site.

I spent five years in Nepal and many of Mr. Serra Vega's conclusions could be extended to the rest of the Himalayas, such as the need for outside support to stop deforestation, supporting measures like planting and tending village woods to supply firewood, building small hydroelectric power stations and convincing climbing expeditions to carry their own fuel.

I think that the *UNESCO Courier*'s initiative of entrusting articles on the World Heritage to writers from developing countries is a very interesting one as they may give a fresh view of an area perhaps facing similar problems to those found in their own countries. I also enjoyed Mr. Serra Vega's description of the grandeur of the Amazon forest and of the complex relations between fauna, flora, ground and atmosphere in his article about Manu National Park, in your August-September 1991 issue.

TERESA CRICHTON-STUART
25 GRAFTON SQUARE
LONDON

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Theme of the next issue (January 1993):

Rendezvous with space

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For roll film users, this information for the current volume year is at the beginning of the microfilm. For a prior year volume, this information is at the end of the microfilm.

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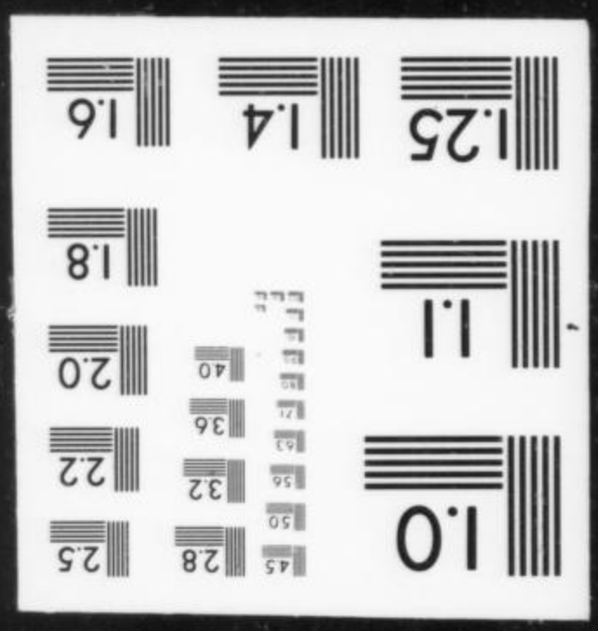
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